



Horsham Local Plan 2024 Hearing Statement

Land West of Ifield

Save West of Ifield

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Matter 1.2	4
3.	Appendix 1	15

Document Reference:

24.327

Version 3

Date of Issue:

22 November

2024

██████████
██████████████████
██████████
██████████████████
███
██████

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cerda are instructed by Save West of Ifield (SWOI) to submit a hearing statement on their behalf in respect of matter 1, issue 2.

We would like to raise concern about the strategic allocation policy for Land West of Ifield (WOI), reference HA2. Modifications will be required to the plan to address its "*Soundness*"

Matter 1 Issue 2 – Whether the Council has complied with other relevant procedural and legal requirements?

2. **Question 1:** *Has the preparation of the Plan been in accordance with the Local Development Scheme in terms of its form, scope and timing?*

2.1 The Chief Planner’s Planning Update Newsletter of July 2019 reminded all local planning authorities of the need to keep their own published plan timetables fully up-to-date¹

2.2 The timetable below is from the most recently published Local Development Scheme of December 2023 and has not been kept up to date.

Date	Actual Date	Local Plan Timetable
April-May 2018	N/A	Publish Issues and Options
May 2019-January 2020	N/A	Evidence Gathering
February-March 2020	N/A	Regulation 18: Public Consultation on Draft Plan
April 2020-December 2023	N/A	Regulation 19 Preparation
19 January-1 March 2024	January 19 th – 1 st March 2024	Regulation 19 Proposed Submission and Period of Representation
June 2024	26 th July 2024	Submission
July-October 2024	December 2024 – January 2025	Examination (Hearings to be held October 2024)
November-December 2024	Likely change	Main Modifications Consultation
March 2025	Likely change	Receipt of Inspector’s Report
May 2025	Likely change	Adoption

2.3 **Question 2:** *In overall terms, has the preparation of the Plan complied with the Statement of Community Involvement?*

¹
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950341/190723_Chief_Planners_Newsletter_July_2019.pdf

-
- 2.4 No, it has not. Paragraph 2.21 of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) states that *“The Government expects councils to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that ‘cross border’ issues are co-ordinated effectively and clearly reflect the policies of each of the councils affected.”* SWOI commented at regulation 19 stage that there was an absence of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) to address strategic issues. In time for the examination these have been updated but they do not demonstrate any collaborative working which have been effective in dealing with our concerns about infrastructure.
- 2.5 Paragraph 1.8 of the SCI quote the NPPF that plans should “Be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees” and; “Be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation”
- 2.6 Paragraph 1.9 states that the Council “will also explore ways to work closer with groups who are less involved in the process as it is important to capture the views of the whole community.”
- 2.7 Many residents considered that HDC’s Regulation 19 consultation process, as set out in their formal notice² was inaccessible and non-inclusive, particularly due to digital exclusion and ableism. Residents found the online process extremely difficult to navigate for tech literate individuals, and even for some IT professionals, to the extent that many people reported on the SWOI Facebook page and via other means that they were finding it 'too hard' and giving up. There were options to submit via email or post, but these also required downloading and completing a registration form from the website. Citizens who had no access to the online registration form could obtain a paper form by collecting it in person from the HDC offices in Horsham, with apparently no option for the form to be posted out to those with restricted mobility (see Page 1 of HDC’s Formal Notice).

² Statement of Representations Procedure and Proposed Submission Document Availability

-
- 2.8 These issues also run contrary to paragraph 1.15 of the SCI *“Recognising the needs of different groups in the community – we will communicate in methods that are relevant and accessible to all members of the community.”*
- 2.9 Paragraph 1.15 also states that the Council “will provide clear and up-to-date information on our consultation processes and ensure information is provided at the earliest opportunity to allow time to respond”. As can be seen from the table we provided to answer question one, the Council has not met their timetable or updated their LDS.
- 2.10 Paragraph 1.15 also says that the Council “will ensure that all planning documents, background studies and responses to consultation (Summary of Representations) are available on our website.” There is a summary available, but we don’t consider it captures all of the points we raised in the regulation 19 consultation, for instance there is no reference to the concerns we raised that the location of a Secondary School in WOI, that the requirement was not justified, because it would not serve the Education needs of East of Crawley without resulting in negative congestion and air quality effects at peak travel times.
- 2.11 **Question 3:** How has the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) informed the preparation of the Plan at each stage?
- 2.12 The SA explains that the Council concluded that 10 large site options were appraised in more detail than smaller site options, but there is no explanation why they concluded that as many of the smaller sites would have been acceptable to align with the preferred SA spatial options.
- 2.13 The SA included anomalies which favoured WOI over Horsham Golf and Fitness Club which we covered in our regulation 19 representations paragraph 4.13. A reappraisal based on correct information would have meant that the SA might have reached different conclusions which would have informed the Council of a different approach.

-
- 2.14 The information used in the SA is incorrect. Our review of the SA concluded that the outcomes did not reflect the aims and objectives of the plan.
- 2.15 We expected to see changes to the plan as it progressed and as issues were identified. It is surprising that the SA still gives little consideration for the loss of the golf club and the likely impact it will have as a result of members travelling further to access alternative facilities, instead it states that the high growth option is positive because it can provide services and facilities, no account taken of any lost services or facilities.
- 2.16 There has been little change in the strategy, nothing which would lead us to conclude that the SA has informed it, indeed the evidence which we have concerns about, such as site assessments have determined the path of the SA.
- 2.17 We still don't understand why the Council chose option 4 which included accepting additional growth to meet the unmet needs of neighbouring districts, when the Council cannot meet its own housing needs. The SA fails to give sufficient weight to the lack of cross boundary infrastructure provision and the harms which arise from developing WOI.
- 2.18 **Question 4:** Does the SA assess all reasonable alternative spatial strategy options, levels of housing and employment need and options relating to other policies in the Plan? Where it is considered that there are no reasonable alternatives, relating to all policies in the Plan is this clearly explained?
- 2.19 What is lacking is evidence or information about how WOI will contribute to the population health and wellbeing of Horsham. The SA is built upon the evidence obtained in Horsham. The SA provides lots of information about Horsham house prices and housing needs, existing housing stock and type, the proportion of owner/occupier and that Horsham is in one of the least deprived areas of the Country.
- 2.20 If you remove the district boundaries, spatially it is clear that WOI is an extension of Crawley and will rely on the infrastructure, services and facilities of Crawley, there will be no

relationship to Horsham and the allocation does not contribute to Horsham’s housing or employment needs.

- 2.21 This is important because the SA has not adapted to changing circumstances. Since it was originally developed the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2024 has been adopted. The Inspector’s Report concluded that *“the plan preparation process for Crawley has generated a very significant unmet housing need. At the time of Plan submission there was no clear mechanism or agreement as to how the unmet need could be accommodated.”*
- 2.22 The Inspector’s Report also stated that the *“the positively prepared policy for an area of search for the Crawley Western Multi-Modal Link (CWMLL). This infrastructure is not technically required for the Plan’s growth but would support strategic growth in Horsham District”* The Local Plan does not refer to the CWMLL. Policy HA2 point 8 states that a transport strategy is to be provided as part of a masterplan, which includes extensions to the Crawley Fastway bus rapid transit network. The SA on page 176 does refer to the CWMLL but the evidence underpinning whether the scheme would provide mitigation is not conclusive and the Horsham District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2024 states that this element is critical to the Strategy, the indicative cost is unknown and won’t be completed until phase 2 of the development. The SA gives no consideration of the risks that this scheme will not be delivered and both the plan and the evidence we refer to are not aligned, even the references to the network are inconsistent.
- 2.23 The SA does not take account of Crawley even though at least one of its allocation sites will be dependent on its infrastructure, services and facilities, and would provide a Secondary school for Crawley. The SA does not provide any clear understanding about the existing or future relationship of housing provision beyond Horsham. Crawley’s evidence base should underpin the allocation and be part of the SA. This omission means that WOI scored more favourably because the effects are not considered.
- 2.24 **Question 5:** Is the SA adequate and have the legal requirements of the 2004 Act and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (2012 Regulations) been met?

-
- 2.25 As already explained, the effects and relationship of the allocation in WOI to Crawley are not fully covered by the SA and we would suggest that the one submitted does not appraise the full social or environmental effects of development here. There is nothing in the Local Plan or Evidence Base to show that, to the extent that habitat and biodiversity has been material to the plan-making, the choices made between strategic sites and the decision to allocate the WOI has been based on, or is supported by, any ecological survey data or analysis. None has been made public. Nor evidence of consultation with neighbouring authorities, local wildlife groups or local naturalists and communities. The decision-making and the scoring appear to be based on nothing more than a desk-top exercise using (very partial) records in the SxBRC and DEFRA's Magic tool.
- 2.26 In addition, in our representations we have extensively covered the issues that the plan fails to address with regard to the infrastructure required to sustain development at WOI, much of which raises cross boundary issues which have not been addressed. The SA has been undertaken without full consideration of these issues or evidence which supported Crawley's Local Plan where relevant to WOI. The SA has failed to consider the recent Inspector's Report for the Crawley Local Plan, the changing circumstances of the growing unmet housing need and critical need for housing infrastructure.
- 2.27 The SA is not adequate and is not based on the right evidence to justify its recommendations. Because of this the SA has failed to appraise the sustainability of option 4 and in particular WOI.
- 2.28 Policy HA2 also refers to necessary transport improvements, yet the Infrastructure Delivery Plan expects highway infrastructure improvements to arrive with the 10,000 development. The Evidence Base and in particular the SA only addresses the 3,000 houses. The impacts of 10,000 houses should also be considered, and this was the view of HDC in response to HE's 2020 EIA Scoping Request. One of the arguments is the fact that House Copse SSSI would sit right in the centre of the 10,000-house development, with the CWMML passing

within metres. The impacts on the SSSI and the surrounding network of ancient woodland and hedgerows would be significant, breaking important existing wider ecological networks. While our Reg 19 response focuses on the impact of HA2, it also makes reference to the key impacts of the 10,000 home proposal with the CWMML.

- 2.29 **Question 6:** Has the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) been undertaken in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017?
- 2.30 The Habitats Regulation Assessment Air Quality Addendum September 2024 identified that the plan will exceed the 1% critical level of ammonia threshold in relation to The Mens SAC during the plan period. The HRA therefore concludes that the plan would adversely affect a European site which is contrary to paragraph 105 (4).
- 2.31 We note the Natural England comments dated 13/09/24 which suggest that on the basis that the NPPF changes will instigate an immediate review and that the 1% target will be exceeded later in the plan period, they can work with HDC and CDC *“to secure robust mitigation proposals prior to the threshold being breached.”*
- 2.32 Whilst a HRA has been undertaken, the plan-making authority cannot give effect to the land use plan if it was considered sound (we don't think it can be) because the 1% threshold will be breached so it will adversely affect the integrity of the European site. Consequently, it would not be legally compliant to adopt the plan.
- 2.33 **Question 7:** How has the Plan responded to potential adverse effects on the Mens Special Area of Conservation? Are any specific main modifications needed to the Plan to reflect the latest evidence? What is the latest agreed position with Natural England on this matter?
- 2.34 As indicated above critical ammonia levels have not been addressed and the plan cannot be legally adopted unless a strategy is developed to reducing its effect on air quality, either through improvements to existing infrastructure or by removing housing allocations.
- 2.35 **Question 8:** Does the Plan contribute to the mitigation, and adaptation to, climate change consistent with s19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraphs

152-158 of the NPPF? Does the Plan include policies in relation to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change? Which Policies specifically?

- 2.36 The allocation WOI is dependent on the infrastructure connections with Crawley, as well as its services and facilities. The absence of joint strategic planning means there are no policies to fully mitigate the effects of the allocation which is likely to lead to significant local traffic congestion contrary to section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 *“Development plan documents must (taken as a whole) include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.”*
- 2.37 HDC’s assessment and understanding of existing and potential biodiversity value across all Strategic Sites is inadequate and so the scoring and comparison of the sites in the SA is distorted – see discussion in our Reg 19 responses for Policies 17 and HA2 Biodiversity, and see comments from Sussex Wildlife Trust at Regulation 18 stage, *“the plan should not be taken forward as the significant effects on biodiversity remain unquantified and poorly understood...”* which HDC have not actioned.
- 2.38 The CWMML was considered to be required in Crawley’s plan to support growth in Horsham District but is not directly referred to in Horsham’s plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan defers the issue until *“Phase 2 of the development”* which we can only conclude will be part of a future plan. The allocation itself will displace a golf course from a currently sustainable location and require existing members to travel further (something which is given no weight in the SA).
- 2.39 The SA scores WOI significantly more positively than other sites for biodiversity, on the assumption that the requirements and mitigations in HA2 will be much more effective than the requirements for other sites. This assumption is itself based on a lack of evidence of the site, its biodiversity and the impact of the development. The scoring has been distorted because of a lack of data.

-
- 2.40 There is a disconnect between the policies and the allocations. The settlement hierarchy would have meant that WOI would not be an acceptable location for development, largely because of its effect on the environment and because of its location to services and facilities it would have relied upon in Crawley.
- 2.41 The policies and proposals to address these issues in the plan do not offer the strategic improvements necessary and which might be expected from plan led development. The site-specific policies are all insular and only provide mitigation within the area under control by the developer. There are no strategic improvements outside of the site which would elevate the allocation beyond what might have come forward as a speculative development which would not have been acceptable with the settlement hierarchy policies of this development plan.
- 2.42 Generally, the policies in Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7 respond to climate change. Those in chapters 8, 9 and 10 do not go far enough and the Strategic Site Allocations include proposals for which there are no requirements which will mitigate the effects of the development or climate change.
- 2.43 **Question 9:** Does the Equality Impact Assessment identify all relevant groups with protected characteristics? Have their needs been taken into account in preparing the Plan?
- 2.44 Equality groups are set out in the Equality Act as nine ‘protected characteristics’.
- 2.45 These equality groups are considered in the EIA. It is not clear how their needs are taken into account in developing this plan, in particular with regard to age. Those who might be unable to drive because of age or health would need to rely on public transport to access the same services and facilities as everyone else. WOI allocation policies do not include any cross-boundary infrastructure improvements, and so we do not believe that everyone who might live at this allocation would have the same access to services and facilities, indeed some may choose not to live here for these reasons.

2.46 Crawley produced a Census Bulletin based on the 2021 census data³ which reported that the largest decrease in car ownership was in Crawley and that *“In proportional terms, car use for work travel was highest across rural areas with rural Horsham District recording the highest level at 63.9%.”* The allocation WOI will not address the current high car usage in Horsham and will not deliver sustainable housing for those Crawley residents who do not drive, or need to drive.

2.47 In addition, the loss of the golf course, which currently is sustainably located for existing Crawley residents, will likely mean that some with ‘protected characteristics’ will be unable to access an alternative facility. These issues are not fully recognised in the EIA.

³ Travel to work and car or van ownership in West Sussex – Appendix 1

APPENDIX 1

Census Bulletin

Travel to work and car or van ownership in West Sussex

Census travel statistics for West Sussex

This Census bulletin reports resident population Office for National Statistics (ONS) information on mode of travel to work, distance travelled to work and car or van ownership. This information includes reporting for districts and boroughs, and the main towns of West Sussex. Key changes between 2001 and 2011 are also shown.

Car ownership in West Sussex

In West Sussex, since the 2001 Census, the number of cars or vans increased by 12.6% to 412,871 in 2011. This outgrew the increase in number of households which increased by 7.7% to 345,614 in 2011. Figure 1 demonstrates that the percentage of households with no or one car or van declined whilst the proportion of households with two or more cars or vans increased.

Figure 1: West Sussex Car or Van Availability 2001-2011



Source: 2011 KS404 and 2001 KS17 ONS

In 2011 the Census showed that 17.8% of households in West Sussex did not have a car or van, 43.4% had one car or van and 38.8% of households had two or more cars or vans. This compares to 2001 percentages of 18.9%, 44.4% and 36.7% respectively. Across West Sussex the average number of cars or vans per household increased from 1.29 in 2001 to 1.34 in 2011. The tables in Appendix B show the key trends across West Sussex.

Crawley Borough was the only West Sussex district or borough

recording a decrease in car or van ownership per household, with a slight decrease from 1.21 in 2001 to 1.20 in 2011. All other statistical areas considered within this report recorded an increase in the number of cars or vans per household. The highest ratio of car or van ownership per household was recorded across rural Horsham District² at 1.69 in 2011, whereas the lowest level recorded was 1.07 in Chichester City. The biggest increase recorded was across rural Arun District from 1.38 to 1.51, however in 2001 rural Arun District had the lowest car or van ownership level across rural Arun, Chichester, Horsham and Mid Sussex Districts.

	2001	2011
Adur District	1.14	1.22
Arun District	1.18	1.27
Chichester District	1.37	1.44
Crawley Borough	1.21	1.20
Horsham District	1.51	1.56
Mid Sussex District	1.42	1.46
Worthing Borough	1.09	1.15
West Sussex	1.29	1.34

Table 1: West Sussex Cars or Vans per household

Source: 2011 KS404 and 2001 KS17 ONS

Travel to work in West Sussex

In 2011, the car remained the dominant mode of transport for journeys to work³, as shown in Figure 2, with nearly two thirds of people who were in employment travelling to work by car. The proportion of people travelling to work by a sustainable mode of transport (train, bus, cycling or walking) in West Sussex was 23.4%.

The proportion of people travelling to work by car or van decreased by 2.0% (for drivers) across West Sussex between 2001 and 2011. Appendix C shows key trends across West Sussex. The largest decreases were recorded in East Grinstead (3.9%), Haywards Heath (3.4%), Crawley Borough (3.3%) and Horsham (3.0%). In proportional terms, car use for work travel was highest across rural areas with rural Horsham District recording the highest level at 63.9%. The lowest levels were in Chichester City (46.6%) and Haywards Heath (48.8%).

¹The main towns reported in this bulletin have been defined by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), except for Crawley and Worthing which are defined by their respective boroughs. Whilst ONS have produced definitions of Built Up Areas and Urban Areas for the 2011 and 2001 Censuses, there have been a number of boundary definition changes affecting settlements in West Sussex making comparisons invalid. A map showing the definition of the LSOA geographies used in this

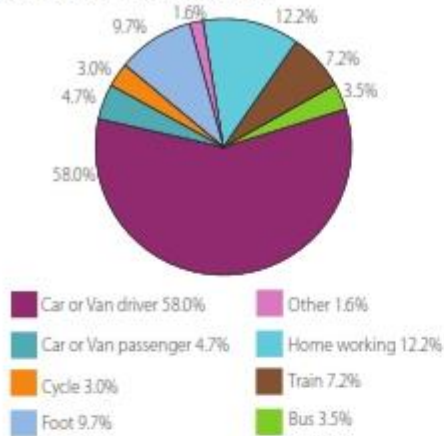
report is included in Appendix A.

²The rural areas of districts used in this report are defined as all LSOAs outside the main town LSOAs.

³The ONS have released two main Method of Travel to Work 2011 datasets which define home working in different ways. In 2001, people who recorded their place of work as working mainly at or from home were considered to have their mode of travel to work as working mainly at or

from home (available in file KS15). In 2011, people working mainly at or from home could record, for example, that they travelled to work as a driver in a car or van, despite being based at home (available in file QS701). ONS subsequently released file CT0050 which is directly comparable with 2001 KS15 and it is this data which are presented here. ⁴Equivalent average distance data is not available for 2001 and only available down to District/Borough level in 2011.

Figure 2: Method of Travel to Work 2011



Source: 2011 CT0050

12.2% of residents reported that they work mainly from home in 2011, an increase of 1.9% from 2001. Rural Chichester recorded the highest proportion of home working at 18.4% followed by rural parts of Horsham and Mid Sussex Districts which both recorded 17.3%. The largest increase was across rural Mid Sussex which recorded a 4.0% increase in the proportion of people working from home. This increase in home working contrasts with the increase in car ownership across rural areas reported above.

Train use for work commuting increased by 1.4% to 5.8% in 2011. The largest increase was in Haywards Heath where rail commuting was recorded by 19.2% of people in 2011, increasing by 2.9% from 2001. As a proportion of total travel to work, rail use is highest in locations closest to rail services.

2.9% of people reported bus as their usual method of travel to work. The biggest change in mode share was across Crawley Borough where there was a 4.4% increase in the proportion of people reporting travelling by bus to work. Elsewhere the proportion of people using bus travel for work remained largely static with the biggest change recorded across East Grinstead with a 0.4% increase. The Crawley Borough figure appears to largely account for the 0.6% increase recorded in bus use across West Sussex as a whole.

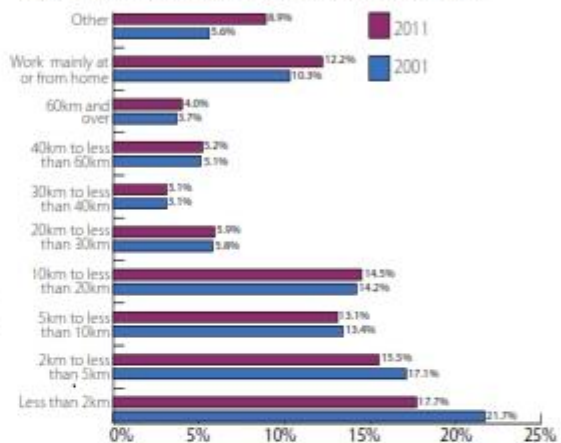
In terms of walking, 9.7% of West Sussex residents reported using this method to get to work in 2011, similar to 9.8% of residents in 2001. The highest reported level was 23.9% in Chichester City with the lowest level across rural Mid Sussex at 5.0%. The largest increases in the proportion of people reporting walking to work between 2001 and 2011 were in Chichester City (1.4%) and Burgess Hill (1.3%) whilst the largest decrease was across rural Mid Sussex (1.4%).

Cycling was recorded as the main method of travel to work for 3.0% of West Sussex residents in 2011, decreasing by 0.5% from 2001. The highest levels of cycling were in Chichester City (7.8%) and Worthing Borough (5.0%). Almost all areas of West Sussex saw a reduction in the proportion of cycling to work from 2001 to 2011.

Distance travelled to work

Distances travelled to work in West Sussex increased from 2001 to 2011, as shown in Figure 3 and Appendix D. The average distance travelled to work was 16.9km for West Sussex as a whole in 2011, which varied from 14.2km in Crawley Borough to 19.2km in Mid Sussex⁴. Each statistical area considered in this report recorded a decrease in the proportion of people travelling less than 2km to work, with the biggest decreases being in Bognor Regis (-7.4%) and in Haywards Heath (-6.3%). However, journeys less than 2km still made up the greatest proportion of all West Sussex work travel distances at 17.7% in 2011, despite a reduction of 4.0% in this category from 2001.

Figure 3: West Sussex Distance Travelled to Work 2001-2011



Source: 2011 QS702EW and 2001 LV35

Summary

The decrease in proportion of car commuting for work from 2001 to 2011 was replaced by increases in home working, train use and bus use. Walking remained relatively static as a proportion of main travel modes to work, while cycling decreased. In contrast to the reduction in the proportion of car commuting, car ownership levels have increased between 2001 and 2011. Distances travelled to work have also increased.

It is important to note that the Census questions ask about the main method of travel to work, so information about additional journey legs, such as walking or cycling to the rail station are not included.

The information presented in this summary note includes resident population data travel characteristics only. It is also important to note that commuting patterns for areas are based not only on the travel behaviour of residents who commute to work within and outside their local area, but also the people that commute into local areas. Further Census data releases about the origins and destinations of travel to work journeys, and the travel characteristics of people that commute into areas using Workplace Zones are expected during 2014.

West Sussex Census Working Group.
 Census Lead: Elaine Munns, Strategic Planning
 Compiled by: Jamie Dallen, Planning and Transport Policy
 Assistant Planner, Strategic Planning
 Tel: 01243 642105

west
 sussex
 county
 council
www.westsussex.gov.uk

West Sussex
 JSNA

<http://jsna.westsussex.gov.uk/>

ONS
 Census

www.ons.gov.uk/census