

DISTRICT COUNCIL: Horsham

Objection to: Planning application DC/23/1178 on the grounds of insufficient education infrastructure provision

Related to: Horsham Golf Park, Denne Park, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0AX

Lodged by: West Sussex County Council acting as Local Education Authority and statutory provider of school places

Background

Developers are required to mitigate the impact of their proposed developments and, where appropriate, provide or make contributions towards site specific education provision where a specific need is identified arising from the impact of the development. School places are required in perpetuity to mitigate planned development.

As the Local Education Authority (LEA) the County Council has the statutory duty to make or secure education provision available for each child in its area, and to provide or secure the provision of a school place for each child, within the local catchment area (being as close to the place of residence as is reasonably practicable) where possible. Schools should be provided close to where the need arises, to encourage sustainable travel behaviour and the wider benefits of being part of a local community. An inability to meet school places nearby could result in pupils being allocated spaces at a greater distance from their home, not in accordance with sustainable place making or education provision policy.

Implications for this development

The current local plan made provision for secondary school education by allocating a new all-through school site at land North of Horsham. This school, Bohunt Horsham, transferred to its new site in 2021 and is now filling to capacity. Secondary provision in Horsham District is therefore unable to expand, considering existing anticipated growth, and the lack of an allocated or secured site for a new secondary school.

As this development is coming outside the adopted Plan and the Local Plan review there is not any capacity. Consequently, the County Council as LEA, objects to the planning application for significant housing coming forward at this stage.

Concerns about accessibility of Primary Education

West Sussex County Council would also like to raise concerns about the safe access to primary education provision. Parents will be unable to seek free school travel for their children as there are primary schools within two miles of the development. However, these schools are not nearby or conveniently located, being towards the maximum walking distance for the children and their parents to travel.

It is questionable if there are suitably safe walking and cycling routes to schools in the South of Horsham or in Southwater. The position for young families walking to school would be sub-optimal as in parts the pavements are quite narrow for pushchairs and adults and children walking two abreast.

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Schools Planning Officer

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21/8/23