

KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK LOCAL PLAN REVIEW EXAMINATION

West Winch Growth Area – Community Infrastructure – Outstanding issues from Day 8 (28 March 2024)

On Day 8 (28 March 2024), the Inspectors requested further information regarding delivery of community infrastructure, with particular reference to the provision for secondary education facilities for the West Winch Growth Area (WWGA) to include:

- LEA analysis to support off-site provision and confirmation as to why new secondary school is not the most sustainable option on a development of this scale
- evidence to show that existing King's Lynn schools can accommodate increased secondary pupil numbers
- Public transport arrangements for pupils to travel to secondary schools from WWGA

Accordingly, the Borough Council requested further information from Norfolk County Council's Infrastructure team (as the local education authority's strategic planning team). Feedback was received from the following County Council Officers:

- Infrastructure Planning Lead Officer (IPLO); and
- Head of Passenger Transport (HoPT)

This feedback provides the additional explanation as to how the WWGA can be delivered in a sustainable way, without the provision of a new secondary school on-site. Statements from the IPLP and HoPT are set out below.

Statement from IPLO relating to school transport provision (email, 03/04/2024)

Currently children living in West Winch are transported by bus, free of charge, to King's Lynn Academy (high school) as this is their catchment school and the distance is more than 3 miles from their home. This is in accordance with national school transport legislation and the County Council's home to school and college transport policy www.norfolk.gov.uk/schooltransport Some children also receive free transport to King Edward VII Academy because it is nearer to their home than King's Lynn Academy.

Children from the new housing development who live more than 3 miles from the designated high schools in King's Lynn, measured using the nearest available walking route (as per national legislation), would be eligible for free school transport therefore the current transport provision would be scaled up to accommodate those children.

For those children who live within the 3 mile qualifying walking distance for free school transport there will be a range of sustainable travel options available - improved local bus services operating through the development and improved walking and cycling routes in line with the adopted Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the updated King's Lynn Transport Strategy (KLTS).

Statement from HoPT relating to school transport provision (email, 05/04/2024)

Norfolk County Council Children's Service has reviewed the implications of the WWGA during multiple reviews of the plan period. The conclusion has always been we can provide additional expansion on a site for King's Lynn Academy, the site size has sufficient room for expansion and this a project which is included within the council's capital programme.

We have commitment to expand to 8FE¹ over the next couple of years, with a further expansion planned if needed to meet demand up to a maximum of 10FE. The county has a policy to build new secondary schools at a minimum 900 places, which is a minimum of 6FE, based on the secondary school multiplier used by the authority to determine child yield, this demand would be met by a development site of approximately 6,000 dwellings, to operate at absolute capacity.

Taking into account the West Winch and other development across the area we believe there will be adequate accommodation to meet this and the wider demand. The existing pressure which is across the secondary sector will fall away in time and indicate a gradual but sustained decline in pupil numbers that will be entering education, based on the significant birth rate decline. We anticipate one more year of higher numbers moving across into secondary, following this numbers will continue

¹ FE = Forms of Entry

to decline, which will support additional growth across West Winch and the wider King's Lynn area.

Based on the close proximity of the secondary schools across King's Lynn, we use their collective capacity to balance the pupil population and it is anticipated this close relationship of high preferences to the three schools will continue. There is already a volume of vehicle journey to meet existing demand, based on the geography across King's Lynn and wider area.

We measured the preference for places from and within the King's Lynn Town area focussing on the 3 High Schools. Preference patterns indicate that over the last 3 years there were 2086 Y7 aged children living in the area, and 2062 children were offered Y7 places at the 3 Schools. This indicates that catchment and preferences are in balance and that there is very little drift in and out of the area at secondary transfer age, we can therefore use catchment forecasting to assess the future need for places.

Two of the three High Schools run a sixth form provision, but this sector can be quite difficult to predict due to the changing course offers by the schools, and the variable stay on rates from students each year. As this element of the provision can be so volatile and the establishments operate to the capacity they have available at the time, we can assess the demand for places focussing on the main 11-16 age range, years 7 to 11.

The three High Schools have a total 11-16 capacity of 3350 places at the present time. We have a building project progressing for King's Lynn Academy to expand from 900 11-16 places to 1200, and expect this to be available from late 2025. This brings the total available capacity for 11-16 children to 3650 places.

The table below shows the latest forecasting for the 11-16 population measured at school catchment level and combined across the town. The forecasts also include the influence of housing development for the next 10 years and we have modelled the anticipated influence of the 4,000 home West Winch development that falls within the catchment. This major development will take longer than the current forecast period to build out, so we are only seeing the first phase of the development at this time.

Year	Housing	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total
2024/5	376	716	722	717	688	640	3483
2025/6	283	729	725	731	726	697	3608
2026/7	148	747	737	732	740	735	3691
2027/8	111	719	752	742	738	745	3696
2028/9	250	719	724	758	747	743	3691
2029/0	280	674	725	730	763	753	3645
2030/1	280	694	682	733	737	771	3617
2031/2	283	614	702	689	741	746	3492
2032/3	270	687	623	710	698	749	3467
2033/4	245	680	696	630	717	705	3428

With just under 99% of children from the area likely to require places in the town, and a total capacity available of 3650 places from 2025 onwards, we expect to be able to accommodate the demand within the existing estate for the medium term. We will continue to study the demand closely as we update our forecasting and development monitoring information each year.