



KEEP ROOKWOOD  
GREEN

# THE CASE FOR ROOKWOOD



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# Rookwood Golf Course...

...is well used –  
it provided an  
average of 34,000  
rounds per year from  
2015 to 2019

...hosted  
40,000 rounds  
in 2020 despite  
14 weeks of  
lockdown

...is Horsham  
District's only local  
authority owned  
pay-as-you-play  
golf course

...is a net financial  
contributor to HDC  
that has provided  
over £180,000 in  
the 4 years to 31st  
March 2021

...will be protected  
by Sport England  
using NPPF paragraph  
97, unless HDC can  
evidence that the  
course is surplus to  
sporting need



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# Residents want Rookwood to remain a golf course

*Petition: over 10,000 signatures, 1,254 survey responses... to date*

"Quality of life cannot be overlooked and the local green spaces are inherent to mental health and air quality"

**"Spaces such as Rookwood can't be replaced once destroyed"**

"It is a valuable, affordable, fully utilised golf facility open to all who might not relish a traditional golf club"

**If nature were really at the heart of your plans for Rookwood you wouldn't be thinking of building on it at all"**

"It's a green space and a wildlife corridor linked to the nature reserve. A very precious space for people and wildlife"

**"We need to keep Rookwood green as Horsham is fast running out of green space"**

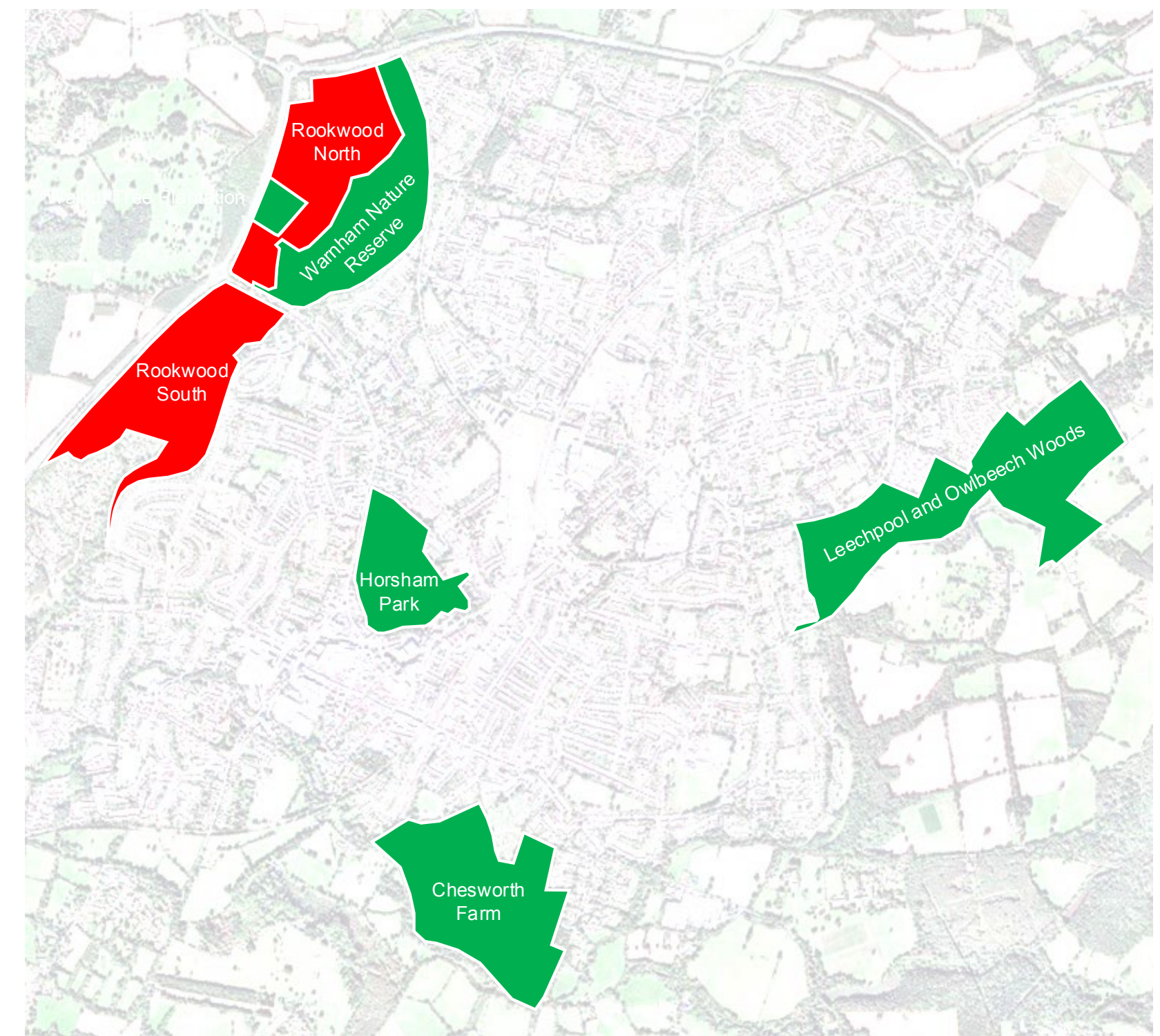


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# Horsham's large green space

- In total, Rookwood is 33% of Horsham's large green space
- HDC's revised proposal suggests that about 75% of the site will be developed
- We want HDC to protect our green spaces for a future larger Horsham Town

Site	Area (Hectares)	% of Total
CHESWORTH FARM	36	17%
HORSHAM PARK	24	12%
WARNHAM LOCAL NATURE RESERVE	37	18%
LEECHPOOL & OWLBEECH WOODS	42	20%
ROOKWOOD SOUTH (SHELAA SA394)	32	16%
ROOKWOOD NORTH (SHELAA SA395)	34	17%





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# Rookwood is highly biodiverse

- Rookwood has been well managed in a wildlife friendly way
- Golf courses can provide up to 60% greater biological diversity than farm land
- Plans do not take account of the existing but unrecorded biodiversity –  
HDC consultants only spent 3 days on site
- January 2020 - No data in Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
- December 2020 - **420 SPECIES IDENTIFIED... AND COUNTING!**



*Will developing Rookwood really increase biodiversity?*



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# Rookwood is a public asset

- **1986:** Land purchased by HDC for public use and designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1987
- **1991:** Half the land undesignated to create the golf course and, in 1996, build luxury housing

***2021: Rookwood is held in trust by HDC on behalf of Horsham residents***





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# The 1986 purchase agreement

*The original owners must be given a share of any increased land value if HDC grants planning permission on the land*

## Covenant on Rookwood land north of Warnham Road:

- Cannot be used other than for **agriculture, forestry, public open space, country park and/or public recreation** without written consent of the original owners
- Only permits development of a hotel, motel, travel lodge or golf course

## Covenant on Rookwood land south of Warnham Road:

- Permits **residential, shop, office or industrial development** subject to normal planning procedure



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# Is Rookwood deliverable?

Rookwood is the **ONLY PUBLIC**  
pay and play course in Horsham

There has been a **SIGNIFICANT**  
**REDUCTION** in local 18 hole courses

There is a **GROWING DEMAND**  
both nationally and locally

Sport England can **PROTECT** Rookwood under  
**NPPF 97** unless **HDC** can clearly demonstrate  
that it is now surplus to requirements

*Where is HDC's evidence that the course is surplus to requirements?*





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# Is building on Rookwood fiscally responsible?

HDC invested £2M  
(on top of the land  
purchase price) to  
create Rookwood Golf  
Course, why write off  
this investment?

If HDC sells now, 50%  
of sale proceeds have  
to be given away to  
the original owners,  
the Lucas Trust

The Golf course  
generates annual  
income for HDC  
(£35k in 2019-20,  
projected to be £50k  
in 2020-2021)

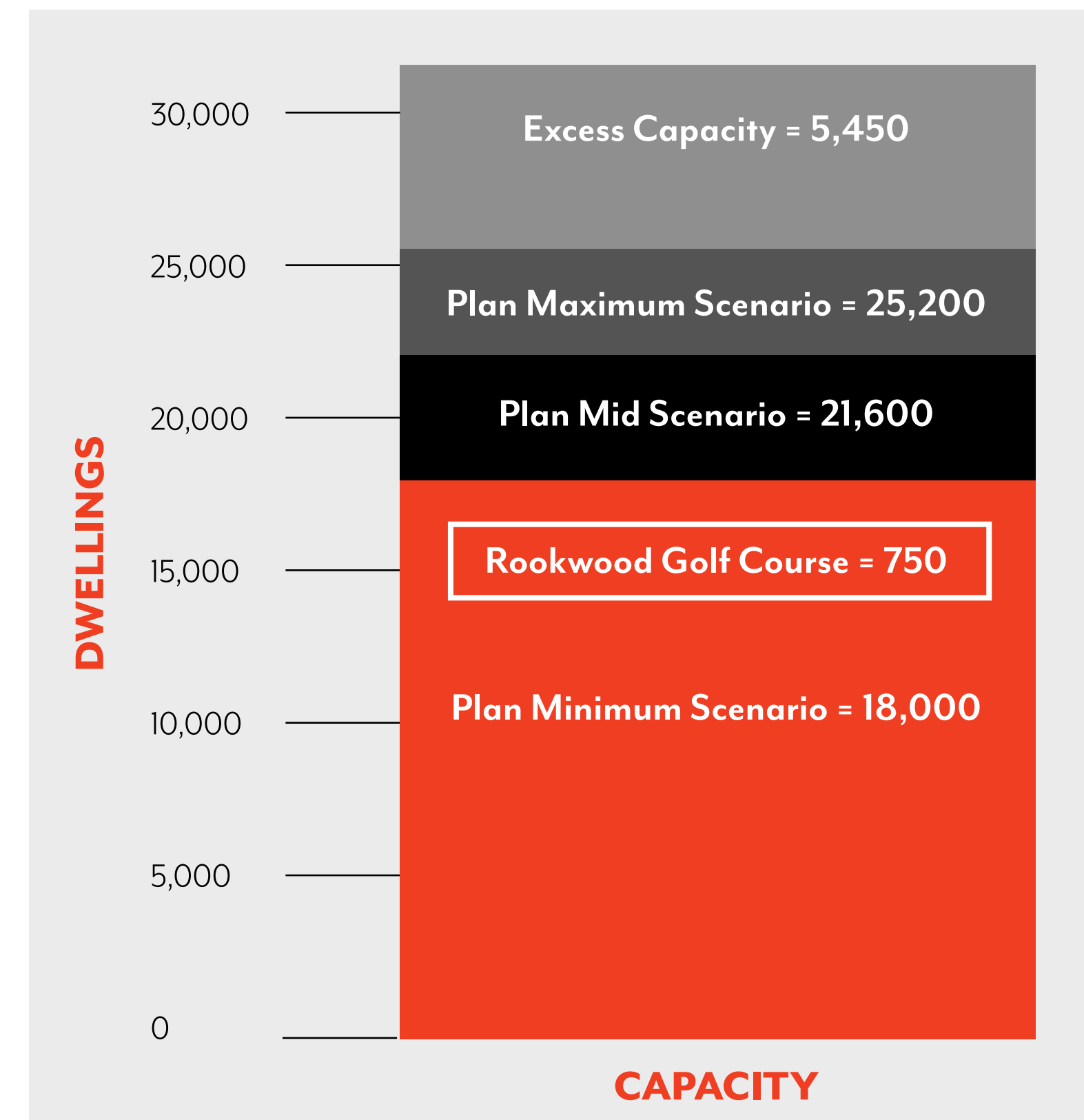
*At a future time HDC can retain the whole value – what is the hurry?*



# HDC *does* have a choice

- HDC's three housing build rate scenarios will deliver 18,000 to 25,200 dwellings
- The plan sets out delivery options for a maximum of 30,650 dwellings
- The draft plan's excess capacity is between 12,650 and 5,450 dwellings
- Rookwood contributes just 750 dwellings

*In all scenarios HDC can meet its building target AND choose not to build on Rookwood*





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# Rookwood should not be developed

## *Retaining Rookwood Golf Course:*

- Generates long term benefit for 60,000 residents' wellbeing
- Future proofs access to green space for Horsham's growing population
- Protects Horsham District's natural capital

- HDC has large financial reserves for use in difficult times
- 50% of the sale profit goes to the Lucas Trust and does not benefit residents
- Rookwood only contributes 3% to 4% of the Local Plan's requirement

*Local Plan targets can be achieved without building on Rookwood at all...*

**Horsham District Council *does* have a choice!**



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The Local Plan is about the **CHOICES YOU MAKE** for **OUR COMMUNITY**... over 10,000 petition signatures show that our community wants HDC to **PROTECT OUR GREEN SPACES** to future-proof this unique green space for Horsham's **GROWING POPULATION**

*Our children will be forever thankful that we didn't build on this irreplaceable natural space*

**We don't want the Local Plan to fail.**

**We just need the "Right" Local Plan**



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This report was created by the Keep Rookwood Green Alliance, working together with the following groups...



Watching Over The Interests of Horsham



FRIENDS OF WARNHAM  
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE



Horsham  
Green Spaces



...and the residents of Horsham