

# CREATING A VIBRANT ECONOMY



**YOUR PLACE  
YOUR PLAN.**  
Winchester District Local Plan

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## BACKGROUND

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### 10.1

Winchester District has historically had a strong economy with low unemployment. Winchester Town Centre has also been a vibrant retail and commercial centre, with a growing leisure and tourism economy.

### 10.2

The council has also declared a climate emergency and developed a Green Economic Development Strategy to create a greener, more sustainable and inclusive economy, in line with its ambition for the Winchester District to be carbon neutral by 2030.

### 10.3

There have been dramatic changes recently in the economy related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global and European economic situations. The effect of recent events are still evolving and there are likely to be further changes to the economy of the country and locally, which are as yet unknown.

### 10.4

At the same time, locally and nationally there is the need to de-carbonise the economy and address climate change. This is likely to result in the development of new forms of economic development, with a much greater focus on green energy and associated supporting infrastructure. This may also involve adaptations to existing forms or businesses and may even result in the cessation of some activities.

### 10.5

With this background, it is vitally important that Local Plan policies are flexible to allow for the changes that may occur and support a green and robust economy.

### 10.6

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the economy overall, and some sectors in particular. Town centres in particular have been subject to rapid change as the effects of lockdowns have added to economic uncertainties in retail and town centre shopping economy. There has been a rapid growth in the role of the internet and on-line trading that has rapidly accelerated as a direct result of the pandemic, which has negatively impacted physical retailing.





## THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL PLAN

### 10.7

Some shops and town centre uses have closed and working patterns have changed. In addition, there have been a number of changes to the planning system, which make it easier to switch between various town centre and business uses as well as government encouragement for residential development in town centres through changes to Permitted Development Rights.

### 10.8

Economic prosperity and supporting the needs of the local economy so that it can continue to be competitive, together with creating a range of local job opportunities, is seen as a key issue for the Local Plan. The Local Plan therefore has an extremely important role in ensuring a suitable amount of land and premises area available for economic development and by having policies with sufficient flexibility to accommodate the need of a changing economy. This includes helping to support and promote and sustain the viability and vitality of town centre it also needs to create the conditions where businesses can invest, expand and adapt.



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## GREEN ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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### 10.9

The Green Economic Development Strategy (GEDS) (2021) sets out the direction for the next ten years to bring green economic growth and transition to net zero carbon. The GEDS has six propriety themes covering all elements of green economic development and a range of proposed actions that will deliver the GEDS outcomes for people, businesses, and the lived experience. The GEDS themes are also relevant to other chapters within the Local Plan.

### 10.10

With regards to this topic, it is considered that the following policies and themes are of most relevance:

#### **Innovative business and economy**

### 10.11

This theme focuses on Winchester District staying competitive and relevant to large and growing businesses by strengthening the relationship management process, refreshing propositions for the major regeneration sites and employment sites and being a catalyst for nature recovery and biodiversity management businesses. The action for this theme is to improve coverage and speed of internet by helping to secure the extension of the digital spine from Basingstoke through the whole of Winchester District.

#### **Skills and competitiveness**

### 10.12

This theme focuses on supporting the link of the foundational and knowledge economy sectors. The key action is to co-ordinate development of a low carbon offsite and Sustainable Construction Skills Academy. This has the benefit of creating lower carbon homes but also creates jobs and economic growth.

#### **Culture, creative and visitor economy**

### 10.13

This theme focuses on a more independent-led, experiential retail and leisure experience. The main action for this theme is to collaborate with the district's education institutions to grow opportunities for the creative and cultural sector. There is an opportunity for underused properties or new developments for creative start-up space, skills hub, and flexible public facing creative exhibitions and events.

### 10.14

The GEDS is being developed into a more detailed series of actions which will be reflected in this Local Plan where they are relevant and available before the Regulation 19 Submission Stage.

### 10.15

As part of the GEDS, a Sustainable Tourism Strategy and an Arts and Cultural Strategy are being prepared.



## EVIDENCE BASE

### 10.16

Various key evidence studies have been undertaken in relation to economic issues:

- Employment Land Study (April 2020)
- Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study (August 2020)

### 10.17

The Employment Land Review (April 2020) (ELR) indicates that there is no need for additional land to be provided across the Local Plan area as a whole over and above what has already been allocated for employment in the current adopted Local Plan. Although there are areas around Winchester Town where some high quality, flexible office development is needed and in the southern part of the district where the exact nature of employment may change.

### 10.18

The Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study (June 2020) (RTCUS) indicates no need for additional retail provision, but highlights the need to protect existing town centres and carefully consider their role to reflect current lifestyles, retail and leisure trends.

### 10.19

It is recognised that both of these studies were undertaken before the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing economic circumstances that have resulted. These studies will therefore need to be reviewed and updated prior consultation on the Regulation 19 Local Plan in order to ensure that any forecasts are based on up to date evidence. The economic policies and site allocations in this plan currently reflect the findings of the 2020 studies. This part of the Local Plan will therefore also be updated as necessary before the submission of the Regulation 19 Plan in the light of the updated evidence base.



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## What are we aiming to achieve



It is important that the Local Plan identifies the overall amount of employment land required over the Local Plan period. It also needs to identify the approach and

the different sectors that the city council will support and encourage in the district in order to realise the ambitions in the Green Economic Development Strategy.

### 10.20

There have been dramatic changes in the economy within the last few years. These are as a result of wider factors such as Brexit and changing nature of physical retailing, as well as the more recent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of these changes are still evolving. Strategic Policy SE1 sets out the Local Plan approach to the economy within the district, which is to build upon the existing strengths of the Winchester economy, providing sufficient flexibility to adapt to changes in the economy, throughout the plan period.

### 10.21

This is to be seen against the background of the climate emergency and the need to move to more low carbon economy as expressed in the GEDS and Policy SE1 therefore encourages a wide range of economic development, within the context of the overall spatial strategy of the Local Plan, and that supports the development of a low carbon economy.

### 10.22

The GEDS sets the context for the development of a new low carbon economy throughout the district. The Local Plan seeks to support the aims of the GEDS, by encouraging new economic development where appropriate, focussing

new development in sustainable locations and prioritising the sectors that have been identified in the GEDS. The aim is to support a wider range of economic opportunities that allow sufficient flexibility to respond to rapid changes in the economy.

### 10.23

The Employment Land Review (ELR) identified the quantum of land required for the plan period. The economic policies and site allocations in this plan reflect the findings of that study. The pace of economic change and the uncertainty in the retail shopping economy mean that this study will be updated before the submission of the Regulation 19 Plan and policies and allocations will also need updating in the light of any findings.

### 10.24

The ELR identified no need to make any additional new employment allocations to accommodate the required need. However, this is dependent upon ensuring that 20hectares of employment land is provided for, that the existing allocations in the adopted Local Plan are completed and the stock of existing employment land is retained.



### 10.25

It is recognised that needs will change over the plan period and the review of the plan in 5yrs will enable these needs to be met. In the short-term the ELR is being updated before the submission of the Regulation 19 Plan.

### 10.26

It is recognised that the local economy also has a large number of opportunities outside of the traditional office and industrial use classes identified in the ELR. The district has particular strengths in the education sector, with the Universities of Winchester and Southampton having campuses within Winchester Town, alongside further education opportunities provided at Peter Symonds College and the specialist Sparsholt College.

### 10.27

There are strengths in digital and information technology within the district and there are opportunities to support innovative start-up businesses within these sectors.

### 10.28

The creative sectors and arts and culture are an important part of the district economy, which would also benefit from the availability of accessible flexible studio and workspace.

### 10.29

The Winchester economy has an established role in relation to day visitors and the tourist economy. Winchester City, and also the market towns, rural area and SDNP. This is to be supported and is expected to grow over the Plan-period.



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## STRATEGIC POLICIES

### GENERAL VIBRANT ECONOMY STRATEGY

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#### 10.30

Town centres will be promoted as lively multi-functional areas that are supportive of food and drink, entertainment as well as tourism, alongside their traditional retailing, commercial and administrative roles. As part of a more flexible approach, support will be given for temporary uses, pop-up business and meanwhile uses.

#### 10.31

The SIP consultation found support for establishing a new low carbon economy and both the Local Plan and the GEDs seek to develop this, by encouraging developments, where they can be supported by the development plan strategy.

#### 10.32

The SIP consultation also showed strong support for more supporting measures for local businesses, such as improvements to digital infrastructure and encouragement for working from home.

#### 10.33

The Local Plan seeks to provide support for a digital economy a more geographically diverse economy and home working, by supporting digital infrastructure (e.g. broadband) co-locating hubs, sustainable transport options and 15 minute neighbourhoods the aspects of which all support each other.

#### 10.34

The city council will therefore support measures to promote self employment and working from home, consistent with other policies of this Plan, including the development of live-work accommodation and ensuring good access to modern communications technology.

#### 10.35

All large scale planning applications (10 or more houses/1000sq.m plus floor space) will be required to enter into an employment and skills plan to meet targets for a range of employment, volunteering, apprenticeship, training and development activities, following the approach promoted by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). This supports the Skills and Competitiveness theme of the city council's GEDS.

#### 10.36

The spatial variations of the economy strategy are set out below in Policy E2. Further policies of this chapter set out detailed economic strategies for specific areas, such as town centres and the rural economy.





**Strategic Policy E1****Vibrant Economy****STRATEGIC POLICY**

The city council will encourage economic development and diversification that supports the council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and Green Economic Development Strategy and is in accordance with the Local Plan vision.

This will be achieved through the retention of appropriate premises and sites, supporting new development that is consistent with the spatial strategy (including appropriate retention, regeneration and intensification of previously developed land) and by allocating land as necessary to support employment growth at sustainable locations.

The plan recognises the contribution to the local economy of employment opportunities outside of traditional industrial use classes. Existing strengths in education and creative sectors, the visitor and tourism economy, including food and drink and entertainment will be encouraged especially where it can be demonstrated that they will create footfall and assist with the night-time economy within town centres.

The Local Plan will support the development of small business and start-up proposals of appropriate scale in accordance with the spatial strategy and new creative industries will be encouraged. Co-location and temporary meanwhile uses will be encouraged.

Appropriate opportunities to expand the economic base and foster innovation in the district will also be encouraged. New forms of business that develop innovative technologies and will help to support a low carbon economy will be encouraged. Consideration will be given to locating development associated with the green economy and low carbon energy generation/renewable energy facilities where appropriate, recognising that this may be in locations not normally considered for economic development.

The local planning authority will support measures to promote self-employment and working from home, consistent with other policies of this Plan, including the development of live-work accommodation and ensuring good access to modern communications technology including high speed broadband.

The Local Plan will support the enhancement of skills in the local area, through the securement of employment and skills plans in relation to large scale developments.



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## SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

### What are we aiming to achieve



It is considered important to set out the spatial distribution of economic growth across the district which will be assist with

delivering the objectives and the vision in the Local Plan.

#### 10.37

Sets out the spatial strategies for economic development in different parts of the plan area.

#### 10.38

The ELR identified a need for 20ha of employment land. This need will be accommodated by a combination of site allocations, permitting new development in line with the Strategic Economic Policy SE1 and the spatial approach set out below. This includes retaining existing employment land where this is feasible and it accords with the plan.

#### 10.39

The spatial strategy of the Local Plan sets out where development should best be located in terms of sustainable development and supporting carbon reduction, which includes economic development. The strategy supports the aims of objectives of the GEDs and reflects the land use implications of this and the economic spatial implications of the spatial strategy are set out below.

#### 10.40

Policy E2 identifies where new economic development is proposed via the site allocations and specific local area policies of the plan, along with indicating the different approaches that should be taken to new economic development across the district.

#### 10.41

**Winchester Town.** Winchester town is the main economic centre in the district. As the County Town located on a main line station with access to the wider region and London, Winchester is also an important focus for administration and regional and local government.

#### 10.42

A need to accommodate about 20 hectares of new employment land has been identified and this will be provided via an allocation at Bushfield Camp (Policy W5). high quality business employment and complementary uses. Specifically; high quality flexible business and employment space, an innovation hub and creative industries



**10.43**

Additionally, further employment will be provided at sites within the city as part of mixed use developments at Central Winchester Regeneration (CWR) area (Policy W7), which will include retail requirements alongside providing additional residential and other appropriate uses, that reinforce and complement the town centre. Employment uses will also form part of the development at the Station Approach Regeneration area (Policy W8).

**10.44**

The existing policy approach of allocating and protecting traditional employment uses within the Winnall area of the City (Policy W6) is to be continued. The policy is aimed at retaining the core of the employment additional B2 and B8 employment floorspace, with more flexibility in other parts of the area.

**10.45**

As part of Barton Farm development (W1) The site has been granted outline planning permission for 2,000 new homes including affordable housing, community facilities, retail development and other supporting employment uses and a park and ride . a new local centre, with a range of shopping facilities to meet locally-generated needs, small-scale employment uses.

**10.46**

**South Hampshire Urban Area.** This area comprises the major source of modern large-scale business development within the district. It is appropriate that this continues and supports growth throughout the wider South Hampshire Area

**10.47**

The continued development of the existing employment allocations at Solent Business Park (Policy SH4) and Little Park Farm (Policy SH5), together with part of the West of Waterloville housing development (Policy SH1) is shown in the site allocations.

**10.48**

**Market Towns.** Opportunities to diversify the economy within the settlements and support their role as locations for local employment and important service centres, will be supported. No new allocations are proposed. Following the principles set out in Strategic Policy SP2 – Spatial Strategy and Development Principles.

**10.49**

**Rural area.** Outside the settlement boundaries, development is strictly controlled in the interests of preserving the rural environment. Economic development will be supported where it supports the diversification of the rural economy and limited development consistent with the high quality environment, as specified in Policies SP3 or E9, E10,E11.



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## SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

### Strategic Policy E2

#### Spatial Distribution of Economic Growth

New employment opportunities will be encouraged throughout the district in accordance with the vision and objectives of the plan and the spatial strategy as follows:

##### Within Winchester Town

- i. Bushfield Camp (Policy W5) About 20 ha new employment land
- ii. Winnall, (Policy W6)
- iii. Station Approach Regeneration Area (Policy W8)
- iv. Central Winchester Regeneration Scheme (Policy W7)

##### South Hampshire Urban Area

- v. Continued development of the following sites;  
Solent Business Park (Policy SH4),  
West of Waterloville (Policy SH1) and  
Little Park Farm (Policy SH5)

##### Market Towns and Rural Area

- vi. Market Towns and larger settlements - appropriate growth and maintenance of existing employment within the key settlements in accordance with the principles set out in SP2. Outside settlement boundaries economic development will be supported where it supports the diversification of rural economy and limited development consistent with the high quality environment, as specified in policies SP3, E9, E10 and E11.





Policy  
E2

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### What are we aiming to achieve



Support the development of vibrant and varied town centres, that are robust to deal with economic changes.

#### 10.50

Sets out the hierarchy of centres in the plan area and principles for development within the centres (identified need quantum).

#### 10.51

Town centres will need to change and adapt with retail development being supported by a much wider range of uses and activities, such as green space, leisure, arts and culture and health and social care services combined with housing to create a space based on social and community interactions. The key will be to encourage uses that will generate and increase the footfall, activity and the appeal of the high street with retail development still at the heart of the centre.

#### 10.52

Appropriate uses and activities will be those that support the economy of the centre, including retail, commercial and office and the growing sectors of entertainment, food and drink and tourist development. The main town centre uses as defined in the NPPF will be generally supported, in summary these are: retail, indoor leisure, entertainment, intensive sport and recreation uses (e.g. cinemas, restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, health and

fitness) offices, arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries, concert halls, hotels).

#### 10.53

Other uses that are primarily aimed at visiting members of the public are appropriate within town centres, such as banks, building societies, estate agents and other professional services health and beauty services, such as hairdressers and beauty salons as they generate footfall.

#### 10.54

Other uses that attract large numbers of people will be encouraged within the town centres, where they are of an appropriate scale in relation to the centre's role in the hierarchy. Public buildings that serve visiting members of the public, or attract a large number of visitors such as community halls, libraries, administration centres, educational institutions, and religious buildings may also be considered as town centre uses depending of their scale and operation. Policy E6 sets out detailed criteria for new developments, including where particular uses will be encouraged to locate.



**10.55**

Uses and activities that enhance the visitor experience and increase the attractiveness of centres will be encouraged along with activities that widen the role of centres beyond retail, add to viability and increase vitality. Temporary uses, 'pop up' activities, markets and special events can all add to the vibrancy of centres. Some of these activities will not require planning permission, but consideration will be given to developments that support and assist the promotion of these activities, such as improvements to the public realm, provision of outdoor seating, canopies and outdoor installations etc. Support will be given for the creative economy, which is a vital part of the Winchester economy and Winchester Town in particular.

**10.56**

The visitor economy is an important element of the economy of the district and facilities should be focussed within the town centres. Winchester City and the historic market towns of the district are attractive to visitors and developments that enhance this role will be supported. This includes hotel development, which will need to be considered in accordance with the sequential test set out in Policy E4 below, due to the possible scale of its impacts.

**10.57**

Proposals that develop and support the night time economy within the town centres will generally be encouraged, such as new entertainment and food and drink offers that can offer a variety of experiences at different times of day. Such uses support the visitor economy and provide useful facilities for residents of the town centres. Activity during the evenings, can mitigate against dead frontages and make the town more welcoming by providing natural surveillance. There can be pollution and amenity issues related to these uses, so they may not be appropriate in all locations and may need particular restrictions in relation to their activities.

**10.58**

Town centres should also be places to live, where that would support the economic functions of the centre and enhance vitality and viability and support the night time economy. Residential development can play a useful supporting role, but it is not a main town centre use and does not contribute towards maintaining active frontages within streets. This will therefore generally be encouraged above ground floor within the primary shopping areas.



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## TOWN CENTRES STRATEGY AND HIERARCHY

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### 10.59

Exceptionally, residential development may be considered as part of large scale regeneration schemes, such as within the CWR. Opportunities to provide specialist forms of housing that would benefit from being within town centres will be considered, having regard to the effects on the economy and the strategy of the plan.

### 10.60

The centres of Winchester Town, Bishops Waltham, New Alresford and Wickham contain conservation areas. Proposals within these areas, will need to maintain and enhance the historic character.

### 10.61

Opportunities exist to enhance the quality of the local environment and increase its attractiveness as a place to visit will be supported. Proposals that enhance the sense of place will be supported along with improvements to the built environment, the public realm, or provide public open space. Opportunities should be taken to improve the access to the centres and individual buildings, and ensuring that they are accessible to all members of the community including those living with dementia, people with disabilities and reduced mobility.

### 10.62

The town centre hierarchy supports the spatial strategy of the Local Plan, setting out a network of various centres comprising a variety of different scales and roles. Winchester, Whiteley, Bishop's Waltham, New Alresford and Wickham are the higher level centres. Primary shopping areas (PSA) are identified within these centres and are illustrated on the policies map.

### 10.63

PSA are described in national policy as defined areas within town centres where the main retailing activity takes place. These centres serve an important function within the retail hierarchy and it is important that this role is supported where feasible. Retail development will be encouraged to locate within the PSAs of the centres listed above, which form the centre for the purposes of the sequential test in respect of retail development.

### 10.64

The different town centres of the district have distinct characters that should be supported as described below:

### 10.65

Winchester Town. The City of Winchester acts as a sub-regional centre and has a wide range of shopping, entertainment, cultural facilities and a significant role as a commercial employment area, particularly within the administrative, public services, health and further and higher education sectors.

**10.66**

It is important to reinforce Winchester Town's position as a sub-regional shopping centre for comparison shopping by enabling a variety of different retail opportunities to occur with a range of different sizes and configurations of retail units. New retail development will be supported within the town centre and particularly encouraged to locate within the PSA to maintain the concentration of retail development in and around the historic high street. The availability of shopping and independent shops in particular in historic and attractive buildings/setting is key to the attraction of the centre (also the historic towns add). The historic setting of the City with its conservation area and many listed buildings, means it is a significant attraction for day visitors and overnight stays. Tourism and visitor development will continue to play a large role in its future economy.

**10.67**

There are a number of areas within the town centre that require regeneration and specific sites and proposals are identified within the site allocation section of this plan. This includes the Central Winchester Regeneration (CWR) which is located in the heart of the city and will play a key role in relation to future proposals around the city centre along with plans for the Station Regeneration Area.

**10.68**

Whiteley town centre. Whiteley is still a developing settlement. The town centre is modern and purpose-built, having recently been redeveloped. Whiteley town centre is considered of a scale and function to act as a district centre, serving both the town and a larger catchment area for comparison goods. It also provides a wide range of modern attractions such as indoor leisure and recreation, including a large cinema. It has a wide range of food and drink opportunities.

**10.69**

Bishop's Waltham, New Alresford and Wickham. These market towns are relatively small centres in terms of the retail hierarchy. Despite this, their function as market towns/villages at the heart of larger rural areas means that they act as centres for their catchment areas and a PSA acts as an important focus for activities. These towns have attractive historic cores, comprising of conservation areas. There are growing centres for food and drink outlets and have established attractions of markets and specific events. They are attractive to visitors and are located nearby to the South Downs National Park. These market towns have potential to increase the role of tourism and visitor-related development and attractions.



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## TOWN CENTRE HIERARCHY

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### 10.70

Denmead, Kings Worthy, Oliver's Battery, Stockbridge Road/Andover Road and Weeke. These are at the lower level of centres in the hierarchy and function as local centres, providing clusters of town centre uses within their locality. These centres have a variety of uses and act as important community hubs that provide the opportunity for residents to be able to shop locally for their day-to-day needs and avoid the need to travel. It is therefore important to maintain uses within these centres that support that role and do not undermine the vitality and viability of the centre.

### 10.71

In addition to the centres identified in this policy, there are a number of smaller centres or clusters of shops which are too small to be identified in the Plan as local centres but which nevertheless provide important local facilities, which are protected by Policy E8.

### 10.72

Proposals should not be out of scale in relation to the size and function of the centre where they will be located. In these cases, developments will be directed to centres higher up in the town centre hierarchy.

### 10.73

Specific guidance on how proposals within town centres will be assessed is set out within the development management Policy E7.

**Strategic Policy E3****Town Centres Strategy and Hierarchy**

The Town Centre Strategy is to maintain and enhance the role of centres as thriving areas for community and economic activities and enhance the quality of the environment of the centres.

The vitality and viability of town centres will be enhanced by encouraging a wide range of uses and activities within the centres, of a function and scale appropriate to their position within the town centre hierarchy.

Within the town centres, the main town centre uses of retail, office, indoor leisure uses, will be supported, along with similar uses that are aimed primarily at visiting members of the public and add to the vibrancy and attractiveness of centres, such as those related to entertainment, food and drink, cultural and art and activities that support the evening and nighttime economy.

Developments that support the visitor economy and tourism, including hotel accommodation, will be encouraged, having regard to the hierarchy and subject to the scale and impact of the proposals.

Residential and commercial development will be encouraged above ground floor level.

Developments will be supported where they:

- i. Support the vitality and viability of centres.
- ii. Support the visitor experience and support the centres as destinations for shopping, leisure and entertainment activities;
- iii. Respect and enhance the existing character of the centres, including

the historic character and intrinsic qualities of the built environment within conservation areas.

- iv. Would complement and, where possible, make improvements to, the built environment, public realm and incorporate public open space.
- v. Maintain and enhance the existing role of centres as community hubs or for local administration

New developments and changes of use within the identified centres (listed below & indicated on the Policies Map) will be assessed having regard to the detailed criteria set out in Policy E7 and by taking into account their location and the scale of development proposed, in relation to the town centre hierarchy as set out below:

- vi. Sub-regional town centre – Winchester
- vii. Town Centre – Whiteley
- viii. District Centres – Bishops Waltham, New Alresford, Wickham
- ix. Local Centres – Denmead, Kings Worthy, and in Winchester; Olivers Battery, Stockbridge Road/ Andover Road, Weeke.

The boundaries of the identified centres are indicated on the policies map. Winchester, Whiteley, Bishops Waltham, New Alresford and Wickham have Primary Shopping Areas within the wider town centre area and these are also shown on the policies map.

New retail development will be directed towards the Primary Shopping Areas of centres, where one is identified.



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## RETAIL AND MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES

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### What are we aiming to achieve



We are aiming to ensure that retail and other main town centre uses are appropriately located in relation to their

scale and avoid any harmful impacts on nearby town centres.

#### 10.74

Strategic Policy E4 sets out the council's approach to accommodating the need for new retail floorspace and dealing with proposals for main town centre uses.

#### 10.75

The RTCUS identifies capacity for up to 2,961 sqm net sales area of comparison goods retail by 2029, which is currently projected to fall to 1,852 sqm by 2036. All of that identified need could be accommodated within the Central Winchester Regeneration Area. The identified capacity for convenience floorspace is only 853 sqm by 2029, falling to 634 sqm by 2036, which is considered so low as to not require the identification of any specific sites to accommodate it.

#### 10.76

The RTCUS did not identify any requirement for commercial leisure floorspace and proposals for these uses will therefore be assessed on a criteria-based approach with reference to the town centre hierarchy identified in SE3.

#### 10.77

It is recognised that these floorspace assessments were carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic and will need to be re-assessed in the light of this. Within Winchester Town Centre, a large department store (Debenhams) has become vacant since the RTCUS was completed. As a result of the site not yet coming forward for redeveloped this will also need to be factored in to the assessment of needs and capacity within the town. An updated RTCUS will be prepared prior to the Reg 19 publication of this plan. National Planning Guidance also recommends that retail forecasts be reviewed regularly. This will therefore also be undertaken as part of the review of the plan in 5yrs time.

#### 10.78

Proposals in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations will be required to demonstrate why they could not be located on a sequentially preferable site in accordance with the NPPF. Winchester, Whiteley, Bishops Waltham, New Alresford and Wickham have Primary Shopping Areas within the wider Town Centre boundaries, which is relevant for the consideration of retail development, as set out in the NPPF.

**10.79**

Proposals for main town centre developments that are outside of defined town centres and have floorspace of 350sqm gross or more, will also require the submission of an impact assessment.

**10.80**

The RTCUS found that the current local thresholds within the adopted Local Plan did not prevent the incremental growth of small retail and leisure developments. The thresholds also did not allow the city council the opportunity to identify impacts associated with incremental increases to existing facilities or the change of use or applications to vary conditions on individual units within a retail park. In the light of this, the new 350sqm gross threshold will ensure that proposals for smaller stores and applications to incrementally expand existing edge and out of centre retail offer are appropriately assessed in terms of their potential impact on existing centres.

**10.81**

Consideration of impacts on town centres will include assessment of the effect of the proposal on planned or future investment within centres or the overall planning strategy for the centre, including any regeneration sites identified in the Local Plan.

**10.82**

When assessing out of centre applications for retail or large scale leisure developments, regard will be had to the nature of the use being proposed and any specific format or locational requirements that may apply.

**10.83**

Applicants should agree the scope of any required sequential and impact assessments with the local planning authority prior to the submission of the application.



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## RETAIL AND MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES

### 10.84

If such proposals are approved, conditions may be sought restricting the range of goods sold or the exact nature or the proposed use, or permitted development rights may be removed, where considered justified and necessary in order to protect the integrity of nearby town centres and avoid unnecessary development of town centre uses in inappropriate locations.

### 10.85

Small scale town centre uses that provide a facility or service which is aimed at serving the immediate locality, and are up to c 278 sq.m net (3,000 sqft)<sup>1</sup> in size, will generally be acceptable outside of defined centres. When assessing whether a proposal can be considered as a local facility or service, account will be taken of the nature of the proposed use, its value to the local community, its expected catchment and the amount of traffic generation as well as its size. Policy E8 outlines the approach that will be taken for proposals involving local facilities and services, including shops, and criteria to support the retention of such facilities.

### Strategic Policy E4

#### Retail and Main Town Centre Uses

The required need for retail and main town centre uses development will be met within the identified town centres of the hierarchy, by the development within the site allocations set out in the plan and the approval of new development within town centre boundaries. The scale and form of the development should be appropriate in relation to the size of the centre and its role within the hierarchy.

Outside of the identified town centres, new retail and other main town centre uses will be considered where they comply with the sequential test.

Where the development is for retail or leisure development, an impact assessment will also be required when the proposal is over 350sqm gross.

New or expanded retail development or and large scale leisure development outside of the centres listed in Strategic Policy E3 above will not normally be permitted unless the requirements of the sequential test and any required impact tests have been satisfied.

Shops or other town centre uses that will serve a local need and are under 278sqm (net) in size, will generally be acceptable outside of defined centres and sequential and impact assessments will not normally be required.



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## VIBRANT ECONOMY – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### What are we aiming to achieve



The city council wants to encourage and support new development that will enhance the economy of the district and

provide local employment opportunities in accordance with the Green Economic Development Strategy.

#### 10.86

Strategic Policy E1 sets out the Local Plan approach to the economy within the district. This includes support for a wide range of employment opportunities. Policy E5 below specifically supports the development of traditional employment uses within the industrial and office uses.

#### 10.87

Employment uses are defined as office, industrial and some sui generis uses, as set out in Policy E5 below. It is recognised that there are also a large number of other activities that generate employment that do not fall within this definition. These activities also make a large contribution to the economy of the district and they will be considered in relation the principles set out within Strategic Policy E1

#### 10.88

National planning guidance, as set out in the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) defines ‘industrial uses’ as being general industry (B2-B8) e.g. factories etc, and warehousing and distribution (B8 specifically).

#### 10.89

Office/light industrial uses being uses that can be carried out within a residential area used to be classed as B1 uses, with sub-classes distinguished between office (B1a) and light industrial (B1c). However as of 1st September 2020, this has been subsumed within the new Commercial, Service and Business Class E and is referred to specifically as E(g)<sup>2</sup>. There are further subdivisions as follows;

- i. General, office administration use,
- ii. Research and development and
- iii. Light industrial that can be carried out within a residential area in principle

#### 10.90

Sui generis uses are uses that do not fall within any specified use class. Whether a particular proposal that is sui generis will fall within the terms of this policy will therefore need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Some activities that are specifically referred to in the legislation as being sui generis, that would fall within the terms of this policy however, are - scrap yards and car breakers yards, fuel stations, car sales sites, retail warehouse clubs and mineral storage and distribution sites.

**10.91**

Subject to compliance with the policies of the development plan as viewed as a whole, employment development as described within Policy E5 and the text above, will generally be supported within the settlement boundaries of the district. Within the countryside, proposals will be considered in the light of the rural economy approach set out in policies E9, E10 and E11.

**10.92**

In order to maintain a suitable mix of employment uses across the plan area, it may be necessary to limit permissions to particular use classes of industrial and office development or impose conditions to remove certain permitted development rights, where this would be necessary and reasonable to with regard to the plan strategy and national policy.

**10.93**

In particular, office/light-industrial use will generally be restricted to use within the sub-class E(g), in order to prevent changes to other uses within Class E which would otherwise be permitted under the GPDO and would be inappropriate within industrial areas or outside of town centres.

**10.94**

Class E comprises commercial, service and business uses that should first be considered within town centres in line with the sequential approach. Offices [E(g)] will therefore be carefully considered in accordance with the approaches set out in Strategic Policies E3 and E4 above.

**Policy E5****Enhancing Employment Opportunities**

Employment development will be supported within the settlement boundaries, including new development, extensions to existing businesses and the redevelopment of existing sites for alternative employment uses, subject to meeting the requirement of other policies in the Plan.

Employment uses are considered to be the following:

- i. Offices, light industrial research and development such as can be carried out within a residential area (Use Class E(g))
- ii. Industrial, warehousing and distribution (Classes B2-B8)
- iii. Some Sui Generis activities where they are employment and business-led, to be determined on an individual basis

Uses that attract significant amounts of visitors or are primarily aimed at visiting members of the public will not generally be acceptable within industrial areas and will be directed to town centres in accordance with the sequential approach. Office development will be restricted to sub-class E(g) in order to prevent unregulated changes to other uses within Class E that are appropriate within town centres.

Permissions may be restricted to particular use classes or sub-divisions thereof and/or restrictions may be placed on permitted development rights where appropriate and reasonable.

Due consideration will be given to amenity issues and it may be necessary to restrict the range of employment uses within residential areas, or in the vicinity of sensitive uses, such as residential accommodation, health facilities and education sites.





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## RETAINING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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### What are we aiming to achieve



We want to set out criteria against which any loss of employment will be considered in order to ensure that a range of

employment opportunities are retained throughout the district to support the local economy.

#### 10.95

The Employment Land Review identified a need to retain the existing employment opportunities within the district. Due to high land values, and the attractiveness of the district as a location and a place to live, there are continuing pressures for the redevelopment of existing employment sites for other uses, particularly residential. Employment uses are therefore particularly vulnerable to redevelopment and it is important to ensure they are adequately protected to support the economy of the Winchester District.

#### 10.96

It is also important to ensure that inappropriate activities are not developed in inappropriate locations. Retail and other town centre uses that are proposed in industrial areas or on employment sites, will be considered in accordance with the sequential approach set out in Policy E4 above. Residential development is unlikely to be appropriate within general industrial areas.

#### 10.97

Other forms of redevelopment may not also not be appropriate in employment locations where they do not support the spatial strategy of the plan, or contribute to an increase in unnecessary travel contrary to sustainable travel goals and efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Examples of this may include activities that have large travel implications, such as hospitals, educational establishments. There are a number of existing employment uses on sites within the countryside. These comprise an important component of local employment opportunities across the district and should also be retained where appropriate.

#### 10.98

This policy sets out criteria against which changes of use from established, or allocated employment land and premises should be assessed. This also applies to land or buildings that are currently vacant, but were last used for an employment use.

#### 10.99

It is recognised that it may not always be appropriate or reasonable to retain employment uses and therefore this policy specifies criteria that will be used to assess the merits of changes of use.

**10.100**

As the ELR recommends retaining existing employment sites, the onus will be on applicants to demonstrate why that would not be reasonable or practical in any particular case. Policy E6 sets out a number of criteria that will need to be satisfied. It is recommended that applicants approach the council in advance of submitting applications to agree the scope of supporting evidence that will be necessary to determine the application.

**10.101**

The criteria set out in Policy E6 requires exploring the possibilities of using the premises or site for alternative employment uses in the first instance. This will usually include the submission of viability assessments and details of marketing undertaken to demonstrate that the existing or an alternative employment use would not be practical or viable.

**10.102**

The exercise should be able to demonstrate that the price and terms on which the land or premises were marketed were reasonable by comparison with similar examples in the local area. Information should be provided detailing any interest received from potential buyers or tenants since the marketing commenced. Where interest has been received and that interest has not been pursued, this must be documented.

**10.103**

Proposals should consider the possibilities for relocation of any current businesses on the site. The terms on which any current, or recent occupiers have been offered in relation to the site will form part of the consideration of the proposal.

**10.104**

Occasionally, it may be desirable for sites not to continue in their current use on grounds of amenity or adverse traffic impacts or other environmental grounds. In these cases, the possibility of alternative employment uses should be considered in the first instance, having regard to the spatial strategy of the Local Plan.

**10.105**

Proposals that involve the loss of other activities and uses that provide employment, but do not fall within employment uses as defined in Policy E5, will be considered on their own merits, taking into account the overall benefits of the new development compared with the existing use and assessed against the general policies of the plan.



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## RETAINING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Policy E6

#### Retaining Employment Opportunities

Proposals that involve the loss of existing or allocated employment land and floorspace, or land that was last used for an employment use, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that continued employment use is no longer practical or viable, taking account of the following considerations:

- i. The redevelopment potential for other employment uses including the scope for intensifying or providing an effective use of the site or building, and the potential to improve and extend the range of modern employment floorspace;
- ii. Whether the building or use meets, or could meet, a specific local business requirement - such as providing low cost start up accommodation;
- iii. The potential of the site or building to be developed for a mixture of uses, that include an element of employment;

- iv. The impact of continued employment use on the local environment and amenity;
- v. The suitability of access arrangements for the site/buildings, by road and public transport;
- vi. The benefits of the proposed use compared to the benefits of retaining the existing use.

Proposals that involve a loss of employment use will be expected to demonstrate that the factors set out above have been satisfactorily addressed.

As part of the assessment of proposals, applicants will be expected to provide viability assessments of the sites and evidence of the appropriate marketing of sites for potential employment uses. Marketing should be undertaken for a minimum of at least 12 months.



Policy

E6

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## MAINTAINING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF CENTRES

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### What are we aiming to achieve



We want to set out how developments within centres will be assessed and seek the development and retention of uses

that increase and support the vitality and viability of the identified town centres and the primary shopping areas within them.

#### 10.106

Locating uses together that attract large numbers of people generally has the most benefit in terms of sustainability. The vitality and viability of centres is best served by the clustering of complementary uses in order to promote visits and encourage linked trips. This principle applies whatever the size of the centre. Changes of use from main town centre uses do not generally improve the vitality and viability of the centre but may exceptionally be considered where they meet the criteria set out within the policy.

#### 10.107

Proposals should contribute to the maintenance of active frontages within centres, particularly on the main high streets or town squares where footfall is the most important, by installing windows and doors on the main frontages and avoiding areas of blank façade.

#### 10.108

Uses such as pubs, nightclubs, hot food takeaways are generally appropriate and supported within town centres, however as they may result adverse amenity or pollution issues, they will be carefully controlled and limits on the hours of operations may be appropriate in particular locations. It is recognised that some of the smaller centres or sites away from the main shopping streets may have more of a residential character.

#### 10.109

For all town centre uses, in order to secure acceptable amenity in the vicinity, the local planning authority may impose conditions on hours of operation, delivery and parking arrangements and require particular lighting or noise abatement measures or ventilation and pollution control measures. Regard will be had to the location of the development, the nature of the proposal and the character of the surrounding area in relation to this.

**10.110**

Residential development can play a useful supporting role in supporting centres, but is not a main town centre use. This will generally be encouraged above ground floor, along with commercial uses that support the function of the town centre. It is important that residential development is able to achieve acceptable living standards for future occupiers. Residential development may not always be feasible where it is difficult to achieve safe access for residents, or where necessary conversion would not be compatible with the maintenance of the historic features of listed buildings.

**10.111**

Uses other than residential that make use of space empty floor space above ground floor level, or behind street frontages will be encouraged where they support the viability and vitality of the centre, including the main town centre uses, offices and professional services, galleries, studios, workspace for creative industries and studios, community uses, health services. Any other uses will need to demonstrate their contribution to the vitality and viability of the centre.

**10.112**

Office and light industrial uses will not always be appropriate within town centres or the main shopping street, where they do not contribute positively to the vitality and viability of the function of the centre.

**10.113**

In order to achieve and preserve a suitable mix of uses and avoid areas of 'dead frontage' or over-concentrations of specific uses, it may be necessary to limit permissions to particular uses or sub-classes, impose conditions on permission relating to restricting range of goods or activities, or remove permitted development rights, where it is necessary and reasonable to do so.

**10.114**

New development, including demolition and redevelopment and changes of use, should not have adverse effects on the character of the centre. The town centres of Winchester, Bishops Waltham, New Alresford and Wickham are conservation areas and also contain listed buildings. Proposals in these locations must protect and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation areas. The effects of necessary internal changes with need to be taken into account in relation to listed buildings

**10.115**

Planning applications and applications for prior approval within the conservation areas will be assessed against the requirement to protect and enhance the appearance of the character of the area. This will include consideration of the effects of the proposal on the vitality and viability of the centre, in terms of how it may effect the existing commercial character of the centre, as well as the effects on the built environment and historic interest.



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## MAINTAINING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF CENTRES

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### 10.116

Notwithstanding any special considerations that may apply in relation to historic settings, developments should ensure they are accessible to all members of the community. Proposals that make use of the public realm, such as pavements and pedestrianised areas, should pay special attention to the needs of all members of the community including those living with dementia, people with disability or those with reduced mobility. Appropriate street furniture and careful siting can assist with this. Sensitively designed lighting can be used to enhance security and surveillance within centres. Detailed guidance can be found in the Design topic, any Supplementary Planning Guidance, including any local Design Guides or Codes.

### 10.117

Within the Primary Shopping Areas, it is important to maintain their role as the centre for retail and other town centre uses. The concentration of the main town centre uses in these locations maintains and enhances the function of these areas as the main focus for retail and related activities. These uses benefit from being clustered together and maintaining high levels of footfall.

### 10.118

Changes of use from the main town centre uses<sup>3</sup> will not normally be allowed in the Primary Shopping Areas as it is important that breaks in active frontages are not large enough to undermine the cohesion of the area. Therefore a distance of 25m from the edge of the unit will be taken into account, within which 80% of the frontage should be in a main town centre use, as measured by distance on the ground. No additional distance will be added in where the frontage continues over footpaths or roads. Corner units will need to consider 25m in both directions.

### 10.119

When considering planning applications for change of use, account will be taken of the suitability of the unit concerned, the period of any vacancy, adequacy of the marketing of the unit, and footfall volumes and patterns.

**Policy E7****Maintaining the Vitality and Viability of Town Centres**

New development within the identified centres should reflect the strategy set out in Strategic Policy E3 above and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.

New development and changes of use within the Primary Shopping Areas.

Within the Primary Shopping Areas of Winchester, Whiteley, Bishop's Waltham, New Alresford and Wickham, as defined on the Policies Map, activities within the main town centre uses will be encouraged and the loss of main town centre uses at ground floor level will be resisted.

Residential development will be permitted above ground floor, where the proposal will result in safe and acceptable standards of living for residents and subject to the general criteria set out above.

Permissions may be restricted to particular use classes or sub-divisions thereof and/or restrictions may be placed on permitted development rights where appropriate and reasonable.

In exceptional circumstances changes of use from the main town centre uses within the Primary Shopping Areas will be permitted where no less than 80% of the Primary Shopping Area frontage will be in a main town-centre use within 25m of the development, as a result of the proposal.

As part of the assessment of such proposals, applicants will be expected to provide viability assessments of the site and evidence of the appropriate marketing for alternative town centre uses. Marketing should be undertaken for a minimum of at least 12 months.

POLICY



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## LOCAL SHOPS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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### What are we aiming to achieve



We want to set out how we will support local shops, facilities and services that can serve local communities and support the development of hubs in appropriate locations in accordance with

the spatial strategy and the 15 minute neighbourhood principle and set out the criteria for considering proposals to change the use of such facilities.

#### 10.120

Local services and facilities provide an important function in supporting the viability and viability of local neighbourhoods, the market towns and more local service centres. Outside of the settlements areas, local services and facilities can provide a vital role in supporting local communities and isolated developments.

#### 10.121

The availability of local services and facilities supports the self-sufficiency of areas and reduces the need for unnecessary travel. Maintaining a network of local services and facilities supports the council's goal of reducing carbon emissions, the overall strategy of this plan and the carbon neutrality policies.

#### 10.122

Within the rural area, the provision and retention of local services and facilities is particularly important, where there is often a lack of choice and easily accessible alternatives and may be limited opportunities for public transport to access wider areas. Some facilities and services may be particularly critical in certain communities, such as the local school, shop or pub.

#### 10.123

It is therefore important to retain any existing provision at the same time as encouraging new facilities and services.

#### 10.124

Local services and facilities fall into the following categories:-

- Community centres and village halls;
- Indoor sports and recreation facilities, including allotments;
- Educational, health and care establishments (including nursing/care homes);
- Premises for the emergency services, public utilities and infrastructure;
- Local pubs and shops;
- Libraries, cultural and arts facilities;
- Churches, places of worship and cemeteries/burial grounds.

#### 10.125

The above list is illustrative and is not considered exhaustive.





### 10.126

The SIP consultation results strongly emphasised the importance of local supporting facilities in terms of the local community, local economies and quality of life within localities. Facilities such as local shops and food and drink provision along with local digital workspaces were seen as key to enable more localised working and home working, particularly outside of the larger settlements.

### 10.127

Because of the need to conserve the district's undeveloped countryside, development is generally limited to that which has an operational need for a countryside location or for extensive areas of undeveloped land. To override the normal presumption against non-essential development in the countryside, there must be a need for the development proposed and it must provide an essential local facility or service. The development may either need to be located on the site proposed for operational reasons, or it should be demonstrated that it is not practical or feasible to locate the development within a defined settlement.

### 10.128

Examples of such development may include community or education facilities, premises for emergency services or development by statutory undertakers and public utility providers.

### 10.129

Shops, pubs, arts and cultural services and facilities that attract visiting members of the public are town centre uses, which should be located with regard to the town centre hierarchy of Strategic Policy E3 and detailed considerations set out in Policy E4. These uses are not generally appropriate within the countryside, due to their traffic implications and impacts on the rural character.

### 10.130

Exceptionally such uses may be considered as part of rural economic development or tourism as set out in policies E9 – E11 below. Such proposals will not fall within the terms of this policy as they are not primarily aimed at providing a service or facility for local communities.

### 10.131

Due to the importance of retaining local facilities and services, proposals that involve the loss of a local facility of service will be expected to demonstrate that it is not practical or viable to retain the facility or site in a use that would benefit the local community.

### 10.132

Reasonable attempts should be made to seek an alternative use or facility that would benefit the local community. This includes instances where a particular service or facility has been relocated.



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## LOCAL SHOPS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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### 10.133

In cases where services and facilities are no longer commercially viable, they have occasionally been taken over by the local community. Examples include local shops and pubs. Therefore, sites should be offered for community purchase.

### 10.134

Applicants will be expected to provide evidence of the marketing of the site in support of their proposals. This will include viability assessments and details of the marketing undertaken, such as the terms and conditions under which the site was marketed, where and for how long the site was marketed. Marketing should be undertaken for a period of at least 12 months. Where the sale involves an Asset of Community Value the nominator and wider community will be informed about the proposed sale (or long-term lease). The community has six weeks to express its interest in making a bid and can then prepare and submit a full bid within six months. The owner considers any community bid along with all other bids, but is under no obligation to sell the property to the community and can sell to any bidder at any price. The successful bidder then takes over ownership of the property. The City Council has a list of Assets of Community Value on the web site:

[winchester.gov.uk/community-recreation/crtb](http://winchester.gov.uk/community-recreation/crtb)



## Policy E8

### Local Shops, Services and Facilities

Proposals for the development of new, extended or improved facilities and services will be supported in accordance with the Local Plan vision SP1 and objectives and the spatial strategy set out in SP2. Within settlements, facilities and services that do not serve a local function should be located within the centres in accordance with Strategic Policy E3 above.

In the countryside, shops, pubs, arts and cultural services and facilities that attract visiting members of the public will not generally be permitted, except within the terms of Policy E9 below.

In the countryside, the development of essential facilities and services to serve local communities may exceptionally be permitted, where they comply with the Development Plan and:

- i. There is an identified need for the development within that area;
- ii. A location in the countryside is essential for operational reasons; or
- iii. There are no suitable alternative sites for the proposed development within the defined built-up area of the settlement(s) which the development is intended to serve
- iv. There are no unacceptable impacts on the natural environment or the rural character of the area

Development proposals should not threaten or result in the loss of premises or sites used to provide services and facilities unless it can be demonstrated that:

- v. The site/premise is not required because the service or facility has been satisfactorily relocated or is no longer needed to serve the locality;
- vi. The service/facility is no longer practical or viable; and
- vii. The site or building has no reasonable prospect of being used for an alternative service or facility which would benefit the local community.

As part of the assessment of proposals, applicants will be expected to provide viability assessments of the sites and evidence of the appropriate marketing for alternative services or facilities. Marketing should be undertaken for a minimum of at least 12 months.

When considering proposals, account will be taken of:

- viii. Whether the loss of the service or facility would cause harm for those living within the neighbourhood, settlement, or rural catchment with a reasonable need to access such facilities in the future; and
- ix. Whether the loss of the facility would have a detrimental impact upon the overall vitality and viability of the settlement; and
- x. Whether the loss is part of an agreed plan to provide improved local services in equally accessible location

Any alternative uses or proposals for sites and premises will be assessed with regard to the spatial strategy and strategic policies of this plan.



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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL AREAS

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### What are we aiming to achieve



We are trying to achieve sustainable economic growth in the countryside, developing a thriving and more varied rural economy, whilst protecting the natural and built environment of the

area. Supporting and encouraging opportunities for the development of a low carbon/green economy within this context.

#### 10.135

The spatial strategy sets the context for development across the plan area, as part of which development within the countryside will be strictly controlled. Strategic Policy E2 sets out the economic aspects of the spatial strategy, including the rural area.

#### 10.136

The rural character and the high quality of the local environment of the district's countryside is a much valued asset. It is important that developments within the countryside do not harm the integrity of this asset. The rural economy is also a valued aspect of the district. The GEDS seeks to develop a more low carbon economy, with opportunities for small scale business development in sustainable locations, development of the green economy and supporting low carbon infrastructure and the development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

#### 10.137

Consultation on the SIP found strong support for widening the scope of economic development allowed in the rural area, whilst also supporting respecting the valued aspects of the rural character. Premises in rural areas and more flexibility regarding expansion of existing development will widen rural employment opportunities. This will support the development and viability of local service centres and can enable local clusters of complimentary activities.

#### 10.138

Local employment opportunities can help to support the Local Plan aim of reducing carbon emissions, by reducing the need to travel, provided they are if carefully located in relation to nearby facilities and services and local transport routes that will support active travel. Therefore development should be assessed in accordance with these principles.

**10.139**

The SIP consultation also expressed strong support for maintaining the rural character and natural environment of the district. This may mean that not all economic development can be supported in the rural area.

**10.140**

A balanced approach will need to be taken, using the principles set out in this policy against the objective of preventing unacceptable harm to the rural environment.

**10.141**

There are strict limits to development outside settlements. Accordingly, Policy E9 focuses on the re-use of existing buildings, with limited new development in the specific circumstances as set out in the policy.

**10.142**

Where proposals are put forward outside of settlements, they must be supported by a statement and robust business plan setting out the operational/functional need for the scale of development proposed and the justification for its location including, an assessment of other potential sites and buildings that have been considered. Any such development should be appropriate to the proposed location in terms of scale and must not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the countryside or the form and setting of the settlement. The proposal must demonstrate clear community support.

**10.143**

The contribution that proposals could make to enhancing the vitality and viability of nearby settlements will be taken into consideration. In order to promote sustainable development and minimise car travel, proposals should be located so as to allow for access by active travel where possible. The contribution that proposals that will make to the development of the 15 minute neighbourhood will be taken into consideration when assessing the benefits of proposals.

**10.144**

Proposals that will contribute to the development of hubs that service the local area will be favourably considered. There are benefits to developments co-locating, subject to the resulting scale of environmental impacts. Rural enterprise hubs where a number of small businesses are located in a cluster with shared broadband connection and other essential facilities are of value, making use of existing employment sites or rural buildings, such as farm complexes.

**10.145**

In order to minimise additional impacts on the local environment, all proposals should explore the possibilities of using existing buildings in the first instance. There are often redundant farm buildings which can be utilised, rather than adding new built development to the landscape. It may be necessary to extend them to use for economic development. Where new or replacement buildings are required, where possible they should be in close proximity to an existing group of buildings and the siting, form, scale, design and external materials of the new buildings should not detract from the existing buildings nor the character of the surrounding area.



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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL AREAS

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### 10.146

It is recognised that existing buildings may not always be visually attractive or appropriately sited and it may occasionally be of overall benefit to the environment to construct new buildings or redevelop the site.

### 10.147

Strategic Policy E1 supports the development of more localised working and working from home. Extensions of residential properties to enable business activities and proposals for small scale economic development within the curtilage of existing residential properties will be supported, subject to careful consideration of visual intrusion, the physical scale of development proposed and the nature of any proposed business. Developments that adversely impact on the amenity of the area will not be supported.

### 10.148

The city council wishes to encourage new forms of development to develop a new greener low carbon economy. This is line with the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and the GEDS. Locations will be required for decentralised energy generation and storage. It is acknowledged that some of these developments may have impacts on the environment, so location in association with existing development such as farms may be helpful.

### 10.149

In relation to new development related to the green economy, special consideration will be given to the contribution of the proposal to the national energy strategy, reduction of carbon emissions or other mitigation of the effects of climate change, when considering the merits of the proposal. The weight of any benefits will be weighed against any harmful effects on the character of the rural area.

### 10.150

All proposals for economic development within the countryside will be assessed in the context of their impact on the rural character. The visual impact of proposals, the suitability of the site and access to it and the amount and type of traffic generated by the proposal will be taken into consideration. Issues of noise, light and other pollution will be important in view of the countryside location.

### 10.151

Economic development within the countryside should comply with the plan as a whole, with particular attention to policies that maintain and enhance the character of the rural area and the natural environment (Policies NE1-NE17 and also those relating to sustainable transport (Policies T1-T4) and pollution (Policy D9)

### 10.152

In order to protect the character of the rural environment and prevent the future development of unacceptable uses or forms of development, conditions may be imposed restricting the range of uses, and permitted development rights in relation to changes of use and physical extensions may be imposed where they are justified and reasonable.



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## MAINTAINING THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF CENTRES

### Policy E9

#### Economic Development in the Rural Area

Outside of the defined settlement boundaries, the primary consideration is that new development must not have an adverse effect on the rural character of the area and be compatible with the need to preserve and maintain the quality of the natural environment.

Economic development outside of settlements will be supported when:

- i. The development has an operational need for a countryside location, such as for agriculture, horticulture or forestry; or
- ii. The proposal is for the purposes of business use in association with residential accommodation within the same curtilage; or
- iii. The proposal is for the reuse of existing rural buildings for employment or tourist accommodation; or
- iv. The development will be solely within the confines of established purpose built industrial estates; or
- v. The proposal is for the use of existing buildings - including extensions to such buildings - in order to facilitate the expansion on-site of established businesses or to meet an operational need.

Proposals for additional buildings in association with existing businesses will be considered where it can be demonstrated that there is a need for the development and that this need cannot be provided within the existing buildings on the site or extensions to such buildings.

The redevelopment of existing sites/ buildings on established business sites may exceptionally be considered where proposals relate to established businesses on the site and it can be demonstrated that existing buildings will not meet the requirements of the business.

Proposals for new industrial and commercial development outside the settlement boundaries that do not fall within the above criteria will not usually be permitted. However, proposals may exceptionally be considered where the following criteria can be satisfied:

- vi. There is a recognised and demonstrable need within the locality, for the development proposed;
- vii. Sequentially preferable sites are not suitable or available;
- viii. And the site is well related to a nearby settlement and in a sustainable location

**Policy E9****Economic Development in the Rural Area - continued**

Where planning permission is required, extensions of residential properties to enable business activities and proposals for small scale economic development within the curtilage of existing residential properties in the countryside, will be supported, subject to careful consideration of visual intrusion, the physical scale of development proposed and the nature of any proposed business.

All proposals for economic development within the countryside

will be assessed in the context of their impact on the rural character and the suitability of the location and the nature of the development proposed, including access to the site.

Permissions may be restricted to particular use classes or sub-divisions thereof and/or restrictions may be placed on permitted development rights where appropriate and reasonable.

Proposals that may be acceptable in principle will nonetheless be refused if they result in unacceptable impacts on the rural environment.



Policy  
E9

## FARM DIVERSIFICATION

### What are we aiming to achieve



We are trying to support local agricultural enterprises to adapt and continue to thrive, whilst protecting the natural and

built environment of the area and setting out detailed criteria for new economic development in the countryside.

#### 10.153

Agriculture and land related activities are appropriate uses in rural locations. The need to address climate change issues including flooding, loss of biodiversity, development of new food sources and products creates new challenges in the rural areas. There are also changes due to economic and societal changes which may result in new uses for traditional agricultural areas.

#### 10.154

There are also opportunities to take advantage of these wider changes in a positive way, to promote a more diverse rural economy and to move towards a more low carbon green economy. This may involve new forms and scales of development in rural locations.

#### 10.155

Agriculture and related activities are part of the rural landscape and local economy of the district. The city council seeks to support the viability of existing enterprises with policies that are sufficiently flexible to meet the anticipated challenges in agriculture and the rural economy.

#### 10.156

The diversification of existing holdings into non-food production, which may nonetheless be appropriate in a rural area.

#### 10.157

Feedback from SIP consultation supported land based activities, diversification, their role in supporting the local shops, services and visitor economy, develop a circular and green economy and support for 'green industries' in rural areas. There was also support for the diversification in terms of acceptable low-key uses, roles in farm shops and local tourism. Compatible with the existing character of the rural landscape an encourage use of existing buildings. Typically farm diversification provides for tourism and leisure activity, but also new office and workshop space, as well as on-site manufacturing, and in some cases sale of farm produce.

#### 10.158

More radical changes that involve new buildings may be considered in the interests of supporting the ongoing viability of agricultural enterprises, where evidenced.



**10.159**

Promotion of sustainable forms of agriculture which include environmentally sensitive organic and locally distinctive food production together with its processing, marketing and retailing will be encouraged as part of a thriving and diverse rural economy

**10.160**

Development related to produce from the farm and the local area (define this) may be supported. Brings benefits to the local community and economy beyond the farm itself. Small scale produce or farming-related activities, e.g. micro-breweries, bakeries etc may be acceptable dependant on exact nature of the activity

**10.161**

However some forms of development such as large-scale food processing may be of such a scale that they should be located in industrial locations. This is due to their visual impacts, possible noise, light and other pollution. These uses are more akin to factories and also have unacceptable levels of traffic from deliveries and employees. They should be sited where they are available for accessibility by sustainable transport.

**10.162**

Changes to the economy may mean that large parts of farms, or some farms in their entirety may cease to be in agricultural production. Changes of land from crop production to use such as set-aside for biodiversity benefits, soil regeneration and nitrate or phosphate mitigation will be encourages and may assist in the viability of land holdings.

**Policy E10****Farm Diversification**

Farm diversification will generally be supported, and should utilise existing buildings in the first instance, where practical and feasible. Common forms of farm diversification include visitor accommodation and farm shops. Farm shops should primarily sell products from the farm.

Proposals that attract visitors to the farm (e.g. retailing, cafés, visitor activities, education and leisure activities) are considered in Policy E8, Rural Tourism below. Equestrian development is considered in Policy NE12 of the plan.

Diversification proposals that support the development of a low carbon economy are generally welcomed. These can take a variety of forms involving new uses for land or new constructions and can assist in supporting the viability of the farm. Proposals for renewable and

low carbon energy schemes will be assessed against Policy CN5.

Additional new development on agricultural holdings that will enhance the viability of the existing farm may also be acceptable, including the development of buildings and associated uses that use produce from the farm or farms from within the local area, such as food processing operations, subject to careful consideration of their scale and impacts.

Proposals for diversification on agricultural holdings should provide evidence to indicate how the development will assist in the continued viability of the enterprise.

Complete redevelopment of agricultural holdings should be for other economic uses and in a form that is acceptable in the rural environment.

**POLICY**

10.153

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10.162

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## VISITOR-RELATED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COUNTRYSIDE

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### What are we aiming to achieve



We want to support visitor accommodation and tourist-related development in a

way that does not detract from the characteristics of the rural environment.

#### 10.163

Opportunities exist to make use of the natural assets and beauty of the area and take advantage of links to SDNP and the wider south east area, the coast, and relative accessibility to London and regional airports, in relation to tourism. The visitor economy makes the most of local food and drink business in the rural area, such as rural pubs and restaurants, attractions associated with local farms, such as around farm shops. Such businesses can enhance the local economy, supporting the local supply chain and providing local employment. There are unique activities which attract visitors such as vineyards, recreational fishing areas and opportunities for recreation on local rivers such as the Itchen and Hamble. Also of note are a number of large country hotels that attract visitors and business uses.

#### 10.164

There are opportunities for development in the market towns and the development of a tourism strategy to promote them as a destination for visitors. This may provide the potential for development related to the market towns, nearby or on accessible routes. However, as development is not generally supported within the countryside, it is necessary for proposals to outline the benefits to the local economy as part of the justification for their proposals. May led to potential for development of activities nearby to support them, as part of a strategy.

#### 10.165

There is the potential to use existing buildings such as rural pubs and shops as bases for tourist activities. Possibilities of small scale additional development in relation to them. However, the scale of development needs to be carefully controlled to avoid unacceptable impacts. Therefore the benefits of these proposals will need to be spelt out.

**10.166**

Opportunities for event venues in association with existing buildings, attractions or in an attractive location. Visitor accommodation and associated leisure activities may form part of farm diversification plans. There are also opportunities for development in association with long-distance walking and cycling paths into the South Downs National Park and beyond.

**10.167**

A variety of accommodation is necessary to provide for the varied needs of visitors, ranging from hotels, to bed and breakfast and self catering accommodation to camping and caravanning sites. Larger scale hotels are directed to towns and village centres to support the range of activities there and where they are more accessible by a variety of means of transport and sites are more likely to be available to accommodate their larger footprint.

**10.168**

There is a need for a range of smaller scale accommodation to support the rural tourist industry. Suitably located development can disproportionately benefit the surrounding area by the use of nearby facilities and attractions by visitors who are staying in the accommodation.

**10.169**

For some of these forms of development, their situation in isolated locations, or away from built areas is part of their appeal. However, these may have the potential for disproportionate impacts on the local environment so will need to be carefully controlled. Important factors will be the amount and scale of development in terms of its visual impact. Even camp sites may have ancillary facilities such as amenity blocks, site shops or cafés which will also have an impact, both visually and in terms of potential pollution issues from light and sound and traffic generation.

**10.170**

The location of the site in terms of accessibility and traffic generation will be very important. Limits may need to be imposed on the amount of development permitted as a result – to mitigate negative environmental impacts and minimise traffic issues. Long-term management plans may be sought to ensure that the proposals support the characteristics of the rural environment.



10.163  
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10.170

**Please see Policy E11 overleaf**

## VISITOR-RELATED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COUNTRYSIDE

### Policy E11

#### Visitor-Related Development within the Countryside

New visitor related development, including accommodation and suitable small scale improvements and associated development to existing visitor attractions and accommodation in the countryside will be supported where the proposals are in accordance with the development plan, promote the rural economy and contribute positively towards the ongoing protection and enhancement of the countryside.

Proposals will be expected to make use of existing buildings in the first instance. Proposals which involve new buildings should provide justification as to why it is not feasible to use existing buildings.

Proposals will be expected to provide evidence to support new development in terms of the benefits to the local economy and demonstrate how the proposal will minimise impacts on the local environment, by its location, scale and detailed design.

Traffic assessments of proposals will be necessary and travel plans will be required to show how impacts can be mitigated.

Where proposals are being proposed as part of ensuring the viability of existing commercial development within the countryside (such as pubs or food and drink facilities) this should be made clear in the application.

In assessing proposals for overnight accommodation within the countryside, alongside the general considerations of impacts on the countryside and rural environment, account will also be taken of the following factors:

- i. Potential to use existing buildings
- ii. Accessibility by active travel and sustainable transport
- iii. Location in relation to existing settlements, local attractions, other visitor and tourist uses and long distance sustainable travel routes
- iv. Scale of development in relation to the character of the area and the characteristics of the site
- v. The suitability of local infrastructure and access arrangements

Visitor accommodation that is of a large scale in terms of its physical size or the amount of traffic it generates will not be appropriate within the countryside. Hotels should be located within settlements.

Residential or commercial uses, proposed in association with tourism, recreational and leisure developments in the countryside, but not directly essential to their operation, will not be permitted.