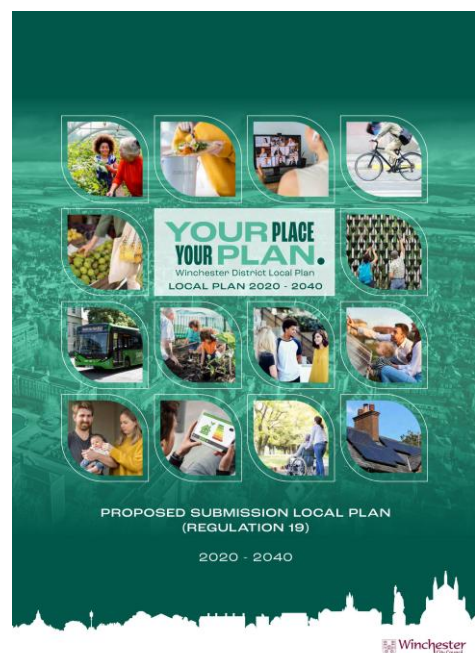


Winchester District Local Plan: -

Matter 3:-

The Plan's vision & Strategic Policies:-

SP1; SP2; & SP3



On behalf of
Montare LLP & Weatherstone Properties Ltd

March 2025

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations are prepared jointly on behalf of Montare LLP & Weatherstone Properties Limited who are promoting a site for a residential development allocation within Olivers Battery (OB). As the site in question has been omitted from the emerging Local Plan document, and in accordance with the Inspector's guidance, no further site specific representations are put forward at this stage of the process. Rather, this paper deals the Plan's overall vision and strategic policies, under **Matter 3**, as follows:-

2.0 Issue:- Whether they are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

- 2.1 The Council's overall vision, which embraces the themes of achieving carbon neutrality and low carbon infrastructure is very much supported and endorsed by our client. This vision is intrinsically linked to the Council's objectives of enhancing bio-diversity and the natural environment. The settlement of OB includes opportunities for site selection that would provide unique and special bio-diversity enhancements, with extensive public space provision, at a level that is unlikely to be available elsewhere in the district. Given its local centre status, there are opportunities to embrace the promotion of sustainable transport and active travel, through the concept of a 15 minute neighbourhood, maximising opportunities for walking and cycling as far as possible. There are also opportunities to address the highway issues identified by the OB Plan (referenced earlier) in terms of possible highway improvements to the junction of Badger Farm Road and Oliver's Battery Road South.

- 2.2 By not recognising OB as being a sustainably located settlement that can help deliver their housing distribution strategy, the Council could be said to be *'talking the talk but not walking the walk'* on their Local Plan's vision. Not to provide any housing requirement for the outlying sustainable neighbourhoods of Winchester, with the town itself clearly recognised as being the most sustainable settlement in the district, is contrary to the sustainable development themes which run throughout the Plan and are crucial to delivering its overall vision. It is also contrary to the national planning policies of the Framework.

- 2.3 In terms of the Inspector's questions regarding Policy SP2, we comment as follows:-

- In terms of the transitional arrangements, we consider that the Council's approach of rushing this critically important document through before the new NPPF's housing rules come into force for Local Plan making is simply wrong. It should be considered in the context of the previous Local Plan Inspector's recommendation to the City Council for an early review which he made in January 2017; so more than 8 years ago now. Rather, in the interests of proper plan making and best practice, we consider that it would be the correct thing to do to ensure compliance now, rather than within a stated timescale for a review.
- We agree that the numbers expressed in policy SP2 should be stated as minimums to accord with the NPPF's paragraph 60.

- 2.4 In terms of the Inspector's questions regarding Policy SP3, we comment as follows:-

- With reference to the specific example of OB, we are not convinced that the policy strikes the right balance between protecting the countryside and meeting local needs;

and we would agree that the policy should explicitly recognise the sustainability of locations immediately adjacent to existing settlement boundaries or previously developed land.

- Sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, where suitable opportunities, should be encouraged to come forward for development in accordance with paragraph 89 of the Framework.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Whilst the Council's overall vision for driving sustainable development is endorsed, it has not been applied consistently to its site selection process. OB, as a recognised sustainable neighbourhood and local centre, should clearly have been identified as providing an opportunity for appropriate growth to meet local housing needs. This would align with the previous Local Plan Inspector's advice to consider sustainable locations for development around the edge of Winchester; an approach which is now even more pertinent in the context of the Government's new Framework. Through this settlement's omission of any site allocations, the vision has failed to demonstrate its effectiveness and is flawed.