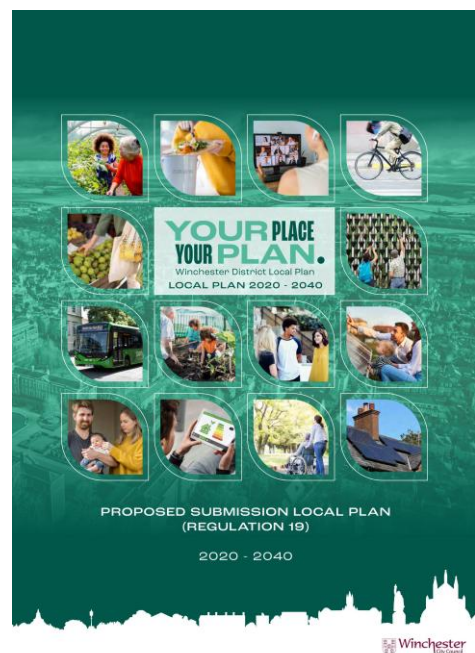


## Winchester District Local Plan: -

**Matter 4:-**

**Meeting Housing Need**

**(Policies H1, H2, H3)**



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 with 'Meeting Housing Needs' under **Matter 4**. It is supported by housing needs research and analysis from CNB Housing Insights. Their Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) report can be found via this link:- [Housing Needs Assessment \(HNA\) Report](#)

## **2.0 Issue:- Would the overall strategy and provision of housing development be justified, effective and consistent with national policy?**

- 2.1 We have no doubt that the Council's detailed calculation of local housing needs (LHN) will be forensically tested by the Inspector through the hearings process. We have serious reservations presently however, given that the Council have rushed to submit their Reg19 version of the Plan to avoid the updated calculations methodology and more progressive, positive housing requirements of the new Framework, that there is a danger that no sooner than the Plan being adopted, it will need to be reviewed again. In this regard, it is noted that the provisional new target for Winchester is 1,157 dwellings per annum, 71% higher than the former standard method target of 676 dwellings per annum.
- 2.2 This seems nonsensical to us and does not represent good practice; ultimately it will cause all parties involved in the Local Plan process more work. It will clearly not accord with paragraph 22 of the Framework which requires strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption.
- 2.3 Other factors to consider in calculating LHN is the position faced by the various Parishes, noting that there is a lack of take up for progressing Neighbourhood Plans. The fine grain of assessing individual Parish housing needs is therefore not being properly addressed.
- 2.4 With regard to the Parish of Olivers Battery, a HNA by CNB Housing Insights that has been specifically commissioned to inform the Local Plan process (available via the link above). As a broad overview of their detailed analysis, we have extracted its 'Executive Summary' as below:-

### ***Why This Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken***

*There has never been a formal assessment of housing needs in Oliver's Battery, despite concern expressed in the 2018 Parish Plan. While that plan identified general issues, it did not look at the number of homes required, who they are for, or whether current housing stock fits future demand. This report fills that gap, offering a clearer picture of the local housing situation and future challenges.*

### ***Who Lives in Oliver's Battery – and in What Homes?***

*Oliver's Battery is a relatively small and settled community. As of the 2021 Census, there were 663 households and a population of around 1,588 people. Most people live in large, owner-occupied homes, especially 3 and 4-bedroom detached properties. There is a significant proportion of older residents, and very few young single people or families with young children.*

### **How Affordable Are Local Homes?**

*Unfortunately, most people on local wages can't afford to buy housing in Oliver's Battery. Even a two-bedroom house costs around £398,000 on the resale market. To afford that, a household needs an annual income of at least £80,000 with a 10% deposit. The average household income in the parish is about £66,100. Rental options are limited and expensive, and even 'affordable home ownership' schemes remain out of reach.*

### **What's the Forecast?**

*Population projections show the population in Winchester will grow by 9% by 2043, with the over-65 age group increasing by nearly 50%. If nothing changes, Oliver's Battery may become dominated by older residents, with limited options for younger people. This risks an unbalanced and unsustainable community.*

### **Is There a Need for Affordable Housing?**

*Yes. An estimated 25 households currently need affordable housing. Taking into account expected new households and demand for affordable home ownership, the report concludes that 14 additional affordable homes are needed each year: 11 for affordable rent and 3 for affordable home ownership. There is currently no plan to deliver any such housing.*

### **Why It Matters**

*Without intervention, Oliver's Battery will become increasingly unaffordable. Younger families and local workers will struggle to remain or move in, services may decline, and the community could become less diverse and less sustainable.*

### **What Can Be Done?**

*The report recommends building new homes in the area. These homes should suit younger families, key workers, and downsizers. They should be genuinely affordable and support a more mixed and sustainable population. Small numbers of affordable homes are needed each year in step with the annual need measured by the HNA.*

### **Final Thoughts**

*Oliver's Battery is at risk of becoming a community only for affluent, older residents. The report offers a clear case for a better housing mix – supporting people of different ages and incomes to stay or move into the parish. This is key to a thriving and sustainable future.*

- 2.5 The HNA provides a robust evidence based report to quantify unmet housing need in the parish, following the recognised methodology as defined by good practice in the NPPF and NPPG. It also explores how housing development within the Parish can address the current imbalances in the housing supply (which it identifies) and help to underpin the long term sustainability and social cohesion of the community.
- 2.6 It is a very powerful report which aligns with our broader planning analysis that a 'no change' approach for the settlement is wrong, as it will inevitably lead to its gradual stagnation and undermine the Council's other key policy objectives to protect its local centres. Without change, OB is at risk of becoming a community only for affluent, older residents. It provides a strong case for new housing development to take place with a better housing mix that

supports people of different ages and incomes to stay or move into the parish. This will be key to ensuring a thriving sustainable future for the settlement. The report should be read in full for a detailed understanding of the local housing position at OB, but its overall conclusions are extracted, as follows:-

- *parish residents live in a distinct community as evidenced by the parish plan produced in 2018;*
- *the population is ageing;*
- *the local housing supply is predominantly 4 or more-bedroom detached owner-occupied housing;*
- *parish house prices, generally and for specific house types, are significantly higher than the Winchester average and vacancies are unlikely to be affordable to many Winchester households;*
- *housing and household characteristics are highly unbalanced with a very low proportion of affordable housing and low proportion of market rental housing compared to Winchester and English levels; and*
- *there is a significant level of demand from households in affordable need annually.*

2.7 They go on to outline CNB's grave concerns about the degree of imbalance of the housing supply and its impact on the sustainability of the parish, as follows:-

- *it is unlikely that vacancies arising in the current stock would attract and retain younger households in the parish on affordability grounds; the more likely scenario is that supply will perpetuate the cycle of younger older person households moving into the area; and*
- *when household projections are taken into account there is the real prospect of the parish housing only old and very old people which would not sustain local business and services other than those dedicated to their care and support;*
- *there would appear to be no specialist accommodation in the area to enable frail elderly people to live independently; and*
- *The system of informal care coming from family members living nearby would appear to be unachievable.*

2.8 Based on their assessment of affordable housing needs (as set out at Chapter 4), they identify two key outputs:-

- **Key output 1** *is that a snapshot of 25 local households were found to be in affordable need; and*
- **Key output 2** *is that the annual flow of additional affordable housing needed to meet local need is 14 dwellings per annum (11 affordable rent and 3 affordable home ownership)*

In respect of key output 2, by way of assisting interpretation, it provides an example of if a housing development took 3 years to deliver from achieving planning permission to full occupancy, in the region of  $14 \times 3 = 42$  affordable units would be needed to meet the local need that would accrue. Additionally, the report identifies unmet need at the Winchester level. This analysis provides a very good guide to the Authority in terms of what might constitute an appropriate level of housing quantum to be provided through potential allocation(s) at OB, noting that a circa 100 unit scheme comprising a conventional mix of

private and affordable tenures would roughly accommodate the above level of affordable housing based on an approximate 40% provision.

2.9 It is noteworthy that CNB's findings of the analysis (see paragraph 4.25) behind their Key Output 2, in terms of assessing the flow of supply of affordable housing over the next 5 years, states that:-

- *There is **no supply of social and affordable rented housing** in the 5-year development as reported in the Council's AMR; and*
- *As the **affordable stock in the parish is minimal** (15 units of social rented housing and no shared ownership), we have assumed a **nominal supply of 1 vacancy per annum**.*

(Note:- our emphasis in bold)

### 3.0 Conclusion

3.1 It has been demonstrated that there is a need to establish a stronger, more cohesive and balanced community at OB. This can only be achieved through a significant level of new build housing that is genuinely affordable to younger households and lower income households needed to sustain local employment in the routine occupations, service and retail sectors.

3.2 The emerging plan's absence of any housing allocations at OB ignores these local needs and in doing so, is wholly unsustainable and unsound. To address such needs therefore requires a new strategy for OB that supports the delivery of new build homes, including affordable housing, and promotes the building of good quality well designed 2 and smaller 3-bedroom homes that would potentially meet the needs of younger families or elderly downsizers.

3.3 The Authority's rush to submission, prior to the new Framework's updated methodology, is highly concerning, particularly bearing in mind the very significant difference in numbers yielded by the respective calculation methods (ie. 71% higher, as highlighted at paragraph 1.13 of CNB's report).

3.4 The examination process provides the opportunity for a re-set of the Council's growth strategy so that it can embrace the themes of the new Framework, and provide for a more positive and ambitious approach to housing numbers, rather than one of just scraping through and then being subject of immediate review. An important part of this work, should be to identify OB, a recognised sustainable neighbourhood and local centre, as an opportunity for appropriate growth to meet the local housing needs identified by CNB's HNA report. This would fully 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.

3.5 In our opinion, the case for a significant housing allocation(s) at OB is compelling, not only in the interests of sound Local Plan making, but morally in the wider social interests of the local community. Not to do so, and thereby ignoring this particular community's housing needs, would clearly not represent a responsible approach to plan making. It would, in our view, run counter to the whole premise of the positive housing themes that the new Framework has introduced.

- 3.6 We would therefore urge the Inspector to carefully examine the HNA report that has been provided in support of these representations; and look forward to this issue being thoroughly tested through the hearing process.

