

WINCHESTER LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 8 Hearing Statement

Hallam Land

April 2025

1. This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of Hallam Land. It concerns Matter 8: Development Allocations the Market Towns and Rural Areas, and particularly Policy DEN1 Denmead. Hallam Land submitted representations at various points during the Local Plan's preparation.

Question 1. Denmead Parish Council is updating its Neighbourhood Plan at present. When is the Neighbourhood Plan expected to be 'made'? What is the evidence that it will come forward in an appropriate and timely manner?

2. Under Matter 4 – the housing requirement, question 11, the Council will have provided an update on the preparation of various Neighbourhood Plans. The Parish Council has formed a working party to carry out of review of the 2015 Neighbourhood Plan and extend it to 2039.

What is the evidence to justify an approach to designate an additional site/sites in the Neighbourhood Plan? What is the evidence to justify the housing target of 100 additional dwellings and would this ensure that development is directed to the most sustainable settlements?

3. Denmead is designated a Larger Rural Settlement on account of the Settlement Hierarchy and the underlying settlement audit. As set out in our response to Matter 2, that audit does not account for the settlement's proximity to Waterlooville and South Hampshire. Denmead is well related to this higher order settlement and accessible to the range of facilities and services it hosts. The centre of Denmead is little more than 2kms from the centre of Waterlooville, albeit separated by undeveloped land that is designated at settlement gap to prevent coalescence. In other instances, that 2km distance is used to support accessible and sustainable locations for large scale development.
4. This category in the hierarchy is comprised of five settlements towards which some 1500 new homes are directed; individual quantum range between 160 and 350 dwellings.
5. Page 389 of the Local Plan reveals how the scale of development at each of these settlements was arrived at:
"The larger rural settlements were asked to identify new sites for 90 to 100 dwellings each. Sites are allocated for this scale of housing in Kings Worthy, Colden Common and Wickham. Denmead is taking forward a Neighbourhood Plan and will also need to identify new sites for about 100 dwellings. At Wickham there is also an opportunity to bring forward a site which has community support for 200 dwellings at Knowle, which has some facilities and services." (emphasis added)
6. This reveals that for the most part this was a top-down approach, albeit a bottom-up approach has enabled a greater extent of new development.

What is the evidence that there are suitable sites available for designation? Would this approach provide the necessary certainty for the development plan process? In taking this approach would the Plan accord with a Plan led approach?

7. Denmead Parish Council has been able to appoint experienced consultant AECOM to advise them on potential site allocations for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan. This culminated in public consultation in autumn 2024 on potential options for how and where new development could be accommodated.
8. This exercise was based on what the Parish Council term “*extensive work*” by the Steering Group on its behalf. Its work was first based on the results of the LPA’s Call for Sites exercise in 2019 but a second such exercise was undertaken by them. This was drawn together and reported in the AECOM Study entitled Site “Options and Assessment Report” published in July 2024.
9. This assessment work was based on the commonly used sieve exercised. Individual sites assessments were presented at Appendix A of that Report which considered statutory environmental designations, non-statutory environmental designations, SPA catchments and nutrient neutrality requirements, fluvial and surface flood risk, agricultural land quality, physical constraints, trees, presence of infrastructure, accessibility to services and facilities within the village, landscape and visual sensitivity, heritage assets, and the likely effect of development on character of the village.
10. The existing settlement gap designation was viewed as a hard constraint and this excluded 14 sites from the analysis. On the basis that this policy is carried forward in the emerging Local Plan this appears justifiable.
11. A further 12 sites were considered not suitable on account of environmental factors, notably location and flood risk.
12. After this sieving exercise, 23 sites remained under consideration. Four were considered entirely suitable for allocation of which three were already allocated in the made Neighbourhood Plan. The remaining 19 were judged to be potentially suitable for development subject to the mitigation of constraints. Together the capacity of those sites total some 1000 new homes.
13. In October 2024, the Parish Council consulted on the three options for how and where new development could be accommodated.
14. The first option comprised a number of small previously developed sites with a combined capacity of 91 dwellings. The second and third options involved two greenfield site adjacent to the settlement boundary which each could accommodate 100 new homes. The third option was in fact a site that could accommodate a greater extent but was presented as effectively a first phase of what could be a larger development. The aggregate of this exercise
15. Plainly the three options together are only a fraction of the potential capacity which the AECOM study had identified. Equally the number of units allocated to Denmead presently is only a part of what the Parish Council themselves consulted on as potential sites for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.
16. On the basis that the Parish Council had satisfied itself, through its work and that of its consultants, that each of those options were genuinely suitable for allocation – sufficient for each to be the basis of the allocation to be proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan in due course, there is a sound basis for increasing the number of new homes to be allocated from 100 to 300.
17. Adherence to the plan-led system would require the Local Plan to set out a higher requirement for Denmead by modifying Policy DEN1. That would be consistent with NPPF paragraph 67.
18. Alternatively, it could amend the requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to allocate land for “at least 100 new homes”, but this does not provide any certainty that a higher amount of development is in fact provided.