



## **Hearing Statement – Matter 8: Market and Rural Town Areas**

### **Winchester City Council – Examination in Public**

#### **Prepared on behalf of Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by SLR Consulting Ltd on behalf of Persimmon Homes (South Coast) Ltd in respect of the Winchester City Council Plan (2020 – 2040) Examination in Public. The Statement focuses on questions raised by the Inspector in their MIQs (ED13) in relation to Matter 8: Development Allocations the Market Towns and Rural Areas (MTRAs) and specifically Denmead (Policy DEN1 Denmead Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area).

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## 2.0 Policy DEN1 Denmead Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area

**Q1: 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??**

- 2.1. The response to this question will need to come from Winchester City Council and Denmead Parish Council.
- 2.2. However, Persimmon Homes has been working in a positive and proactive manner with Denmead Parish Council whilst it prepares the DNP, having been involved in all the public events and engaged in the consultations to identify an allocated site in Denmead that can provide the required 100 dwellings, is sustainable, and has the support of local residents. Persimmon Homes' site, located north of Anmore Road, meets all three criteria: it can provide at least 100 dwellings, is situated in a fully sustainable location close to the village centre, and was the preferred option.
- 2.3. Persimmon Homes also held their own public exhibition to seek feedback from the wider community and to which the parish and steering group were invited.
- 2.4. There is also a Steering Group that meets monthly to discuss progress, and in December 2024, Denmead Parish Council published a report analysing the results of a site selection exercise that was completed to provide for the 100 homes allocated by WCC to Denmead Parish.
- 2.5. This indicates that the DNP will come forward in a timely manner.

**Q2: 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?**

- 2.3. We support the DNP in that extensive work has been conducted to identify a range of deliverable sites and we support the approach of designating additional sites in the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan, particularly given that it is an existing settlement in a sustainable location and identified as a suitable location for new development in the settlement hierarchy. Denmead is also geographically located near Portsmouth and Havant, where there is acute housing need, and minimal travel would be required.
- 2.4. Distributing the required number of homes from the Winchester Local Plan proportionally around the District, ensuring housing targets are aligned with existing settlements is the correct option.
- 2.5. Denmead also has the potential to provide a higher number of homes, as there is the possibility of incorporating additional land around the site and which has been assessed to potentially deliver up to 300 homes across the wider site. Increasing



would help to meet the unmet needs of Portsmouth and Havant (see our response to Matter 4).

- 2.6. If the Inspector felt additional housing was required then this site could accommodate up to 300. However, an allocation of 100 units on the smaller area, as a minimum, is appropriate at this stage.

**Q3: 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?**

- 2.7. Denmead Parish Council is currently reviewing the existing Neighbourhood Plan and seeking to allocate site(s) for an additional 100 dwellings, in line with WCC's emerging Local Plan. The Parish Council has conducted a site assessment and appraisal exercise to identify sites that can deliver the required number of dwellings, are sustainable, and can be developed quickly. This assessment was narrowed down to three options, and a consultation with local residents has been completed on these options, including the site known as Land North of Anmore Road.
- 2.8. This site received positive feedback from local residents due to its sustainability and immediate availability for development. We can confirm that the site is available and ready for development and Persimmon Homes could start on site quickly as there is no expensive or difficult infrastructure required to deliver the site.
- 2.9. The Land North of Anmore has been identified as the preferred option for meeting the housing requirement of the Parish, and we fully support this as it demonstrates positive plan-making, is justified by the SHELAA conclusions, and will ensure the Neighbourhood Plan can be delivered in line with the Strategic Policies in the Plan. Further collaboration between the District and Parish Councils is needed to ensure both Plans can be read alongside each other, preventing one from becoming immediately redundant upon adoption.

**Q4: What is the justification to phase development delivery until after 2030 and would this be justified by the evidence?**

- 2.10. We do not believe there is any justification to delay any development delivery until after 2030.
- 2.11. Document SD10g provides some suggested reasonings for why delaying permissions is appropriate. However, there is no evidence that the earlier delivery of sites across the plan area, or specifically within Denmead would lead to the purported issues in relation to the availability of nitrogen credits and grid capacity.
- 2.12. The answer to this issue is not to artificially or arbitrarily delay the delivery of sustainable development. The NPPF is clear that in making decisions, '*Decision-*



*makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’ (Paragraph 38).*

- 2.13. There is no reason why this should be delayed. This is particularly important as from the 1st July 2026, a 20% buffer will be applied to WCC’s local plan housing requirement (if adopted) irrespective of their housing delivery position. WCC (and the Parishes) cannot afford to restrain development that is already planned for, and indeed it should be more proactive in addressing this fast-approaching requirement.
- 2.14. Development is needed now to meet the required housing numbers. Delaying the approval of sites, such as the land north of Anmore Road in Denmead, will prevent the delivery of otherwise suitable sites, artificially delaying the delivery of acutely needed new housing, having a negative economic and social impact on local communities.
- 2.15. This approach is thus wholly unjustified and not in line with the policy guidance for plan-making in the NPPF. With the additional housing expectations arising from the proposed changes to the Standard Method, reflecting the level of need in the District, we encourage the phased delivery element to be removed.
- 2.16. Plans should ensure that housing needs are met in full, and a phased approach provides a far too rigid framework for delivering growth. The Plan is seeking to use a variety of different sites to deliver the housing numbers. However, Strategic Sites and brownfield sites are often more challenging to develop, subject to delays and additional cost pressures due to land remediation, construction access, and so on, and therefore can often be delayed. The Council should encourage unconstrained sites, such as our site, to deliver alongside other types of sites like strategic and brownfield sites, knowing these are needed to meet their needs and ensure a five-year supply of housing can be maintained. Some sites will slip but there needs to be a variety to ensure delivery.
- 2.17. We believe the current policy framework is unclear and will result in unnecessary delays in housing delivery. It could be open to interpretation regarding the threshold for when these sites can come forward ahead of April 2030, making this phased development neither effective nor justified.
- 2.18. There is a significant need for housing in Winchester and the wider South Hampshire area, and the Council should take a proactive stance to achieve this. Sites should be allowed to come forward as they become available. Land north of Anmore Road is a highly sustainable and favoured site that can be delivered quickly.

**Q5. If the Neighbourhood Plan was not made in a timely manner, how would the housing shortfall be made up? Extant Neighbourhood Plan allocations have yet to deliver what is the evidence that they will deliver in the Plan period (28 dwellings)?**



- 2.19. Given the high level of unmet need in the District, and as noted in Persimmon Homes' Reg 19 response, we believe further growth could be directed to Denmead. This is particularly feasible given the options available to accommodate more than an additional 100 dwellings as part of this Local Plan review. For instance, the site promoted by Persimmon Homes to the north of Anmore Road can accommodate up to 300 dwellings.

**Q6. Should policy DEN1 address off site infrastructure needs? Would it be necessary for the purposes of soundness to address the requirement to liaise with water and waste water providers?**

- 2.20. The Parish Council is working to allocate sites and assess the necessary off-site infrastructure and any required mitigation. While we agree that consulting with Water and Waste Water providers is appropriate, we do not believe it is necessary to prove the Local Plan is sound. Statutory undertakers have a duty to meet their obligations, and the DNP can seek to address this in the site allocation if deemed necessary.





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