

**Swanmore Parish Council Written Statement re ED13 Inspector Note 2- Stage 1 Matters, Issues and Questions, Matter 8, Development Allocations the Market Towns and Rural Areas (MTRAs), Page 17**

**Swanmore  
Policy SW1 The Lakes**

***2. Would the approach to Swanmore, in terms of its place in the settlement hierarchy be justified by the evidence?***

We do not accept Swanmore's recategorisation as a Large Rural Settlement nor the methodology of DS01 Settlement Hierarchy Review (August 2024). We do not think that there is evidence to justify some of the scoring for Swanmore.

**Lack of clarity re evidence**

DS01 Settlement Hierarchy Review (August 2024) page 11, paragraph 4.10:

*Changes in the presence of services and facilities*

*4.10 Audits of the presence of services and facilities were carried out utilising a community facilities audit, further correspondence with parish councils and desktop and other research by the Strategic Planning team. The results of this work were used to record and score the facilities in each settlement within the plan area.*

We have found it difficult to trace the evidence/ information that has led to the changes being made in the scoring for Swanmore.

We think that the addition of a Built Leisure score happened in the 2022 Review of Settlement Hierarchy<sup>1</sup> but we do not know what information WCC received in order to make this change.

As detailed in our previous statement<sup>2</sup> we have not been able to find a clear definition of Built Leisure. DS01 Settlement Hierarchy Review (August 2024), page 7, paragraph 3.5 references the Market Towns and Rural Area Development Strategy background paper published in July 2011<sup>3</sup> This paper does not refer to Built Leisure but has references to leisure centres and at page 29, "a leisure centre (swimming pool)." DS01 Settlement

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<sup>1</sup> See page 17, document on the WCC website at [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/attach/33297/Settlement-Hierarchy-Review-2022-September-2022-Update-Final.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjuc\\_vs87aMAxVyTOEAHb82FHEQFnoECBkQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0fNAqsNQ6qrbtQhgBpXLju](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/attach/33297/Settlement-Hierarchy-Review-2022-September-2022-Update-Final.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjuc_vs87aMAxVyTOEAHb82FHEQFnoECBkQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0fNAqsNQ6qrbtQhgBpXLju)

<sup>2</sup> ED11s Details of Representations Received to the proposed Submission Local Plan (Reg 19) February 2025, Swanmore Allocations, Representation Reference Number ANON-AQTS-32NN-T-Swanmore Parish Council/1/SW1.

<sup>3</sup> Document on the WCC website at <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/attach/4325/MarketTowns-RuralAreaDevelopmentStrategy.pdf>

Hierarchy Review (August 2024) page 10 gives Built Leisure examples as cinemas and leisure centres.

The 2024 Settlement Hierarchy added a score for post office facilities, we understand as a result of Regulation 19 comments and despite us discussing this with WCC.

We requested a copy of the Parish Facilities Audit but WCC told us this was not a stand-alone document and that the outcomes of the Audit are in the 2024 Settlement Hierarchy document.

### **Imprecision of scoring**

The broadbrush approach of the Settlement Hierarchy assessment and the imprecision of the scoring methodology has led to a skewed picture of Swanmore in terms of its services and facilities.

We are in the same category as Wickham and Denmead which are more sustainable settlements. Both have doctors and dentist surgeries, opticians and chemists and a wide range of 10-15 shops. Swanmore has one shop.

### **Bus service is not daily**

DS01 Settlement Hierarchy Review August 2024 page 11 paragraph 4.12:

*4.12 Details of bus services were taken from the most recent timetables and travel guides available on the Hampshire County Council website. Those guides categorise services as hourly or less frequent, and those categories have been used to assess whether a service was daily and hourly (classified as a daily service and weighted with two points) or a less frequent service (and weighted with one point).*

Looking at the relevant bus timetables for Swanmore within the travel guide cited above,<sup>4</sup> whilst the map shows that Route 69 is a red route passing through Swanmore, the route changes on a Sunday and does not come through Swanmore. There are no bus services in Swanmore on Sundays.

Swanmore's services are the 69 (hourly, Monday to Saturday), the 49 (less than hourly, Monday to Friday, also referred to as the 649), the 96 (the Meon Valley Mini Bus, once a day, weekdays) and the SD4 (a morning bus service to Havant College, weekdays and term time).

The inconsistent scoring can be seen if you compare Swanmore's bus services to other settlements with the same points.

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<sup>4</sup> Page 40 of the Alresford, Alton, Meon Valley and Winchester Travel Guide:  
<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/winchester-alresford-travelguide.pdf>

Otterbourne scored the same on Bus Services as Swanmore yet has the number 1 service with a 15 mins frequency from 6.30 to 23.30 including on a Sunday. Kings Worthy scored the same on Bus Services as Swanmore yet has the 6 with a 30 mins frequency for most of the day and a Sunday service.

## **Built Leisure**

The four settlements that have been given a score of 2 for Built Leisure in DS01 Settlement Hierarchy Review (August 2024) are Swanmore, Denmead, Whiteley and Winchester. Whilst we can't comment on Denmead, we do not accept that Swanmore's score should be the same as the larger settlements of Whiteley and Winchester.

Firstly, as detailed in our previous statement<sup>5</sup> the facilities in Swanmore are much more limited. No cinema, no swimming pool; but rather a small fitness suite that is part of Swanmore College.

Winchester has a cinema and a new Everyone Active commercial leisure centre. According to the Everyone Active website:

"This state-of-the-art centre features a 50m eight-lane swimming pool, teaching pool (20m x 10m) and confidence water area for all of your aquatic activities. Our 200 station fitness suite is packed with the latest equipment that's suitable for everyone regardless of your fitness level. While our three group exercise studios host a programme of group fitness classes that are suited to everyone. The unique hydrotherapy pool provides a first class environment for a range of rehabilitative therapies. Our Top Rock fun climbing facility (14 activity lines, 9m high) and an eight court sports hall provide a range of both adult and junior activities. We also boast four glass backed squash courts, a café, an outdoor terrace and Sparx Beauty treatment rooms."<sup>6</sup>

Whiteley scored the same on Built Leisure as Swanmore. Whiteley has a 9 screen cinema and an Everyone Active commercial leisure centre, with gym and gym classes.

Secondly, we understand that the Settlement Hierarchy scoring is based on whether facilities and services are accessible without residents having to get in their cars, see DS01 Settlement Hierarchy Review August 2024 page 3, paragraph 1.4:

*1.4 ... Settlements that are in a higher tier of the hierarchy will often be more sustainable locations for new development, because residents would be able to access a greater range of services and facilities more easily, without the need to travel by private car which is the least sustainable form of transport ...*

The fitness suite at Swanmore Leisure is open to the public from 5pm to 10pm on weekdays and from 4pm to 10pm on weekdays in the school holidays.<sup>7</sup> Weekend opening hours are

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<sup>5</sup> ED11s Details of Representations Received to the proposed Submission Local Plan (Reg 19) February 2025, Swanmore Allocations, Representation Reference Number ANON-AQTS-32NN-T-Swanmore Parish Council/1/SW1.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/winchester-sport-leisure-park/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.swanmoreleisure.co.uk/>

8am to 6pm. For the majority of the day on 5 out of 7 days the fitness suite is not available to members of the public. The availability of this facility is severely limited and this is not reflected in the score.

Bishop's Waltham Junior School has a swimming pool which is a similar offer to Swanmore College's fitness suite in that the pool is open to the public at limited times when not being used by the school.<sup>8</sup> Bishop's Waltham has scored 0 in the Built Leisure category and we would argue that Swanmore's score should also be 0.

## **Post Office**

The post office services at Swanmore, Bishop's Waltham and Wickham have all received the same score but a Swanmore resident would have to travel to another post office if they wanted to renew their vehicle tax or apply for a passport.<sup>9</sup> And, whilst the post office counter should be available for all of the shop's opening hours, this is often not the case as it requires a member of staff to be working who has had the relevant training. The limited post office service and availability is not reflected in the scoring.

## **Summary**

If the above points are accepted so that the scores for post office and built leisure are removed and the bus score amended from 2 to 1 (Daily Bus service infrequent), Swanmore's score would be 20 which would be a more accurate reflection of its services and facilities.

Paragraph 83 of the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework states *"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services."*<sup>10</sup>

The objectives of the NPPF won't be achieved by building more houses in Swanmore. Our limited, part- time services are not comparable to larger rural settlements with high streets and squares full of shops and businesses that would welcome more custom. The one shop in Swanmore already struggles to meet the needs of its users, in terms of having limited stock and parking; this facility will not grow, or be enhanced by development, and there is no space or capacity to add further facilities and services. If building takes place in Swanmore at the same rate as is proposed for the larger rural settlements, Swanmore will certainly not thrive.

**Swanmore Parish Council 4th April 2025**

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bwcommunityswimming.co.uk/community-swimming>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder/3755460/swanmore>

<sup>10</sup> Page 22,

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\\_December\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf)