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Hearing Statement in relation to policy H4.

This policy is not sound as currently written. The policy omits to identify how small infill development sites, within existing ribbons of housing and which form part of an existing settlement envelope but which have been placed outside a settlement's (neighbourhood) development boundary, should be treated for planning. There is no provision with the current policy for development of these small infill sites outside a development boundary.

This policy omission applies to small infill sites which lie outside the defined settlement boundaries listed in H4 - point A ie Bishop's Waltham, Colden Common, Compton Down, Denmead, Hursley, Kings Worthy, Knowle, Littleton, Micheldever, Micheldever Station, New Alresford, Old Alresford, Otterbourne, South Wonston, Southdown, Southwick, Sparsholt, Sutton Scotney, Swanmore, Waltham Chase, Whiteley, Wickham, Winchester Town.

In many cases these infill sites are currently rejected in planning due to the lack of a policy for infill sites which simply exist on the wrong side of the development boundary, often by only a few metres, placing the site in the countryside for planning purposes. These sites are not within the countryside but form intrinsic part of existing settlements. Such sites are often in more sustainable locations and closer to settlement centres than some areas at the edges but within settlement boundaries.

The NPPF section 2 - Achieving sustainable development- Paragraph 11

- 1. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan making that means :*

A) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development

NPPF Paragraph 83 - 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.

Policy H4 does **not** fulfil the NPPF guidance (shown above) since it makes no provision to allow for small infill sites located outside a development boundary to provide towards local communities and does not treat planning applications on such sites to the NPPF requirement of a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The omission of policy detail for such sites means policy H4 is not complying with the NPPF.

To comply with the NPPF policy H4 should include policy provision for development of small infill sites which lie outside a development boundary (neighbourhood plan boundary), that are in sustainable locations and do not extend an existing ribbon of dwellings.

These small sustainable infill sites can provide a valuable contribution to dwelling provisions without impacting on countryside locations, bring forward small sites quickly, enhance local communities since many sites will be fulfilled by smaller local developers /trades.

Policy H4 recognises these small infill sites when no settlement development boundary exists and makes provision for them. But the same policy omits to address small infill sites which lie close to but outside a development boundary meaning they are treated differently, and their valuable contribution is not being recognised or allowed, making the policy inconsistent in its treatment of small infill sites.

The value of these small infill sites outside a development boundary has been recognised by neighbouring planning authorities e.g. Fareham DC which included Policy HP2: New Small-Scale Development Outside the Urban Areas ie development boundary, in their local plan. By omitting a similar policy WCC leaves these small infill sites in a situation where they would allowed in neighbouring Fareham DC but rejected by WCC. This leaves planning for such sites in an inconsistent state depending on which planning authority considers a planning application for these small infill sites outside the development boundary."

Policy H5

This policy is not currently sound in that it omits any policy for planning of self and custom build homes on small sites. A type of dwelling the government and NPPF is keen to encourage. The policy only provides guidance for this type of housing on sites over 50 dwellings and the statement relating to these larger sites is ambiguous.

The policy does not support the following NPPF paragraphs
namely: 16 d which states:

"(d) contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals;"

Paragraph 89 states:

"scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist."

Policy H5 Omits provision for small sites which are put forward for self and custom build and therefore does not fulfil NPPF paragraph 16d or meet the statutory duty to provide for those who wish to build their own homes as it omits clear planning guidance for small homes / small sites, particularly where the sites are located in the countryside or outside but close to settlement development boundaries.

Evidence for self and custom build homes shows those wanting to build this type of

housing want to do so on small sustainable plots where they have greater flexibility to build well thought out dwellings.

This policy must make provision for acceptable small sites in any suitable, sustainable location to be able to be used for self and custom build housing with suitable planning policies. The policy must include small suitable infill sites located outside neighbourhood plan boundaries /

in sustainable countryside locations. These sites can make a valuable contribution to housing need but are currently being excluded by the lack of a policy to provide for small sites for this particular type of housing causing the policy to be unclear for small sites. Such sites should be treated as a caption sites when deemed to treated under countryside policy as they are providing a specialised type of housing.

Self and custom built homes can provide high quality, eco efficient, often specialist dwellings, but there is no clear policy for allowing this planning within this policy. The policy can be restricted to sustainable sites, infill sites and sites which will cause no material harm to the surrounding environment.

The policy as currently written states "To support self-build and custom housing, on sites of 50 dwellings or more developers should offer at least 6% of serviced dwelling plots for sale to self builders for a period of 12 months per plot."

However, it is unclear whether this implies if a site must provide 6% self builds - is on the whole site or only on the number of dwellings above 50? For example a site of 100 dwellings- should it provide 6 self builds plots or 3? This part of this policy is ambiguous.

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