



EXAMINATION OF THE WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2020-2040

MATTER 11: CARBON NEUTRALITY AND DESIGNING FOR LOW CARBON INFRASTRUCTURE

On behalf of Wates Developments Ltd.

Representor ID: BHLF-AQTS-328G-W

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Carter Jonas

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of Wates Developments Ltd. ('Wates') in relation to the Examination in Public of Winchester City Council ('the Council') Local Plan 2020-2040 ('the Local Plan'). Carter Jonas LLP is instructed by Wates.
- 1.2 Wates is promoting the development of land on the northern edge of Winchester, ('the site' or 'Pudding Farm').
- 1.3 The site is identified in the Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) (December 2021) as site reference HW03. The SHELAA confirms that the site is 'deliverable' and 'developable' with no identified environmental, historical, constraints, and only limited physical constraints (this includes flood risk, which is disputed). Wates confirms that the site remains available for development. It is therefore considered wholly suitable for allocation through the Local Plan.
- 1.4 Wates has been supportive of the preparation and principal direction of the key elements of the plan. Wates supports the overall strategy and the aim to provide a stable policy context for developers to help deliver much needed housing across the Local Plan area in a sustainable manner.
- 1.5 Wates made representations in response to the consultations held on the informal (Regulation 18) Plan and the Publication Plan (Regulation 19) consultation on the Local Plan. Wates Representor ID is: BHLF-AQTS-328G-W
- 1.6 In this submission, Wates sets out its responses to Matter 11: Carbon neutrality and designing for low carbon infrastructure, relating to policies CN1, CN2 and CN3.
- 1.7 This statement should be read in combination with Wates' responses to the Inspector's others Matters.

2.0 ISSUE: WHETHER STRATEGIC POLICY CN1 AND POLICIES CN2-CN8 WOULD PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK TO ENSURE THE PLAN MITIGATES AND ADAPTS TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND IN THIS REGARD WHETHER THEY WOULD BE JUSTIFIED, EFFECTIVE AND CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL POLICY?

Strategic Policy CN1 Mitigating and adapting to climate change

1. What is the robust evidence to justify the approach taken in strategic policy CN1 in setting out the overall strategy to achieve net zero and address climate mitigation and adaptation?

- 2.1 Wates generally supports the Council's approach to Policy CN1, and climate change. However, the policy is general in nature and does not add meaningful local detail.
- 2.2 Wates' assessment of the evidence base for the policy is that it relies heavily on national level evidence. Quoted in both the Local Plan, and in the Topic Paper (Doc: SD10a), is the Climate Change Act 2008, and various other legislation, along with Low Energy Transformation Initiative ("LETI") energy efficiency standards.
- 2.3 The local level evidence appears to be derived from the Council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan, but this is more of a monitoring tool than detailed data analysis.
- 2.4 Policy CN1 is useful for 'signposting' strategies to mitigate, and adapt, to climate change but given that building regulations require construction (etc) to be climate change aware, and that the policy relies on national level evidence; there is little more that the policy will achieve.

2. Would the policy strike the right balance between mitigating and adapting to climate change and ensuring delivery of the required level of growth within the Plan period, with particular regard to viability? Would it provide appropriate flexibility in this regard?

- 2.5 Wates' is content that the policy is appropriately balanced in mitigating and adapting to climate change. There is guidance for the design and materials in new development to reduce its likely effects, and alongside guidance in response to climate change effects that are already apparent.
- 2.6 Wates – like many promoters and developers – is well used to delivering development that is climate aware, and responsible, and building regulations require high standards to be met in this regard. Therefore, the policy is unlikely to directly affect the level of development delivered in the plan area.
- 2.7 Regarding viability, Wates has limited concerns about Policy CN1, but there are concerns raised in response to CN3, below.

3. In seeking to minimise carbon emissions would the policy accord with national policy as set out on the WMS published on 13th December 2023?

- 2.8 Policy CN1, does not set specific targets for carbon neutrality instead it encourages the *consideration* of carbon emissions. Wates therefore believes that the policy conforms with the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) titled 'Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update', published on 13th December 2023, which establishes that:

"...the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations"

4. Strategic policy CN1 sets out a design process through which development proposals can consider and incorporate varied forms of low carbon solutions. In the absence of a commitment to produce guidance on the production of energy and carbon statements would the policy be effective? Would the requirement for an energy and carbon statement to be updated to baseline conditions in relation to phased development be reasonable?

- 2.9 Local level guidance on energy and carbon statements is unlikely to be effective, because many of the requirements are likely to be applicable on any site in the country. Local level guidance risks an inconsistent approach to a national (and global) challenge; therefore, Wates would not support local guidance.
- 2.10 Regarding the updating of statements for phased developments, Wates' view is that this would be best managed as addenda to an original report which is a monitoring tool, rather than an onerous resurvey exercise.

5. In not setting specific actions or targets, would the policy be effective in its aim to meet the targets in the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration?

- 2.11 The policy acts to 'signpost' where targets are set out elsewhere in the plan, so it is somewhat repetitive, but it is the other policies (CN3 etc.) which will help the Council meet its targets.

6. Would the policy appropriately recognise the contribution of a heritage led approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change?

- 2.12 This appears to be a gap in the policy. There should be some commentary which considers repurposing existing structures, incorporating sustainable practices in repairs and renovations, and leveraging traditional building techniques to mitigate climate change.

Policy CN2 Energy hierarchy

1. Would policy CN2, when read with strategic policy CN1, serve a clear purpose?

2.13 No. Wates believes that CN2 should either be included in Policy CN1 or become supporting text for it.

2. Would it be clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals? In particular would more explanation of appropriate interventions at each stage of the hierarchy be necessary for effectiveness?

2.14 Notwithstanding comments above, Wates believes that the policy is unambiguous. The supporting text to CN2 provides some more detail about the energy hierarchy, and how to engage with it.

2.15 As above, if the wording of CN2 was included in CN1 then the strategy, and appropriate interventions would be more obvious.

3. Should policy CN2, refer to the positive aspects of spatial planning that would help reduce energy consumption, with particular regard to travel demand?

2.16 This is included in CN1, so to include the matter at CN2 would be repetitious.

4. In seeking to minimise carbon emissions would the policy accord with national policy as set out on the WMS published on 13th December 2023?

2.17 Yes, as above, because there are no targets set out in the policy.

5. Would the policy appropriately address heritage assets when a fabric first approach may not always be appropriate? In this regard would reference to all development be justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

2.18 This matter could be included in CN2 – since it appears to be a gap in the suite of policies – but, in Wates' view it would be better suited to CN1.

Policy CN3 Efficiency standards to reduce carbon emissions

- 1. What is the robust evidence to justify the stated energy efficiency requirements for all new residential development which would go beyond those of the Future Homes Standard? Would they accord with national policy? Given technological and infrastructure and other possible constraints would the policy be justified and effective?**
 - 2.19 As above, CN3 appears to rely heavily on national evidence: Cited are Building Regulations, LETI and BREEAM. These are robust sources of evidence, but they are general in nature, and not specific to Winchester, moreover, the general guidance does not necessarily conclude that development should meet higher standards than the Future Homes Standard.
 - 2.20 The policy is unsound in this regard and contrary to national policy and the WMS of December 2023.
- 2. What is the robust evidence to justify the way in which the energy efficiency requirements for all new residential development is expressed? In this regard, would policy CN3 accord with national policy?**
 - 2.21 Wates' is not convinced that the national level evidence used to support the policy is sufficient to justify its contents.
 - 2.22 The policy is unsound in this regard and contrary to national policy and the WMS of December 2023.
- 3. What is the robust evidence to justify the requirement for 100% on site renewable energy for energy consumption?**
 - 2.23 Wates has seen none, beyond the national guidance and strategies already mentioned, that do not require 100% on site renewable energy.
- 4. How have viability considerations been reflected in policy requirements, including any impacts on affordable housing provision and delivery?**
 - 2.24 It is difficult to understand the full assessments in the viability report. As far as Wates can tell from, the assumptions regarding additional costs appear reasonable, but will have some effect on deliverability in the short term, and especially on the smaller sites. The Future Homes Hub estimates that the increase in build cost for a full 'fabric first' approach, compared with Part L 2021, is circa £19,200 (17%). Compared with the expected 2025 specification it is circa £13,500 (11%) more¹. The targets in CN3 are unsound, but if any are introduced in their stead, these should be phased to ensure that the delivery of infrastructure and affordable housing is not unduly affected.
 - 2.25 Wates also suggests that policy should be clear that any requirements and encouragements regarding sustainable construction are subject to site specific viability assessments.

¹ [Ready for Zero - Evidence to inform the 2025 Future Homes Standard -Task Group Report FINAL- 280223- MID RES.pdf \(cdn-website.com\)](#)

5. Would the policy be clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals?

2.26 Notwithstanding the serious concerns about the targets set out in the policy, Wates is content that the policy is unambiguous.

6. In referring to all new residential development rather than dwellings, would the policy be clear in its intention to require individual dwellings to be net zero? Would such an approach be justified by robust evidence?

2.27 It appears that the Council's intention is that all dwellings should be carbon zero, so the use of the term dwelling or unit would be more appropriate.

2.28 As above, the evidence for the policy is unclear, and appears unjustified.

7. What would be the effective monitoring and compliance mechanisms to ensure the successful implementation of the policy without hindering development progress?

2.29 Wates is unclear on this matter, it is unsure how the Council will monitor (and if necessary, enforce) a policy which is directed towards attempting to regulate unregulated energy usage, in particular.

