

LITTLETON AND HARESTOCK PARISH COUNCIL (LHPC)

Examination of the Winchester District Local Plan 2020-2040

Matter 12 High Quality, Well Designed Places and Living Well, Policy D5 Masterplans

Submission of Littleton & Harestock Parish Council Representation Ref No ANON-AQTS-3BEW-A

Matter 12: High Quality, Well Designed Places and Living Well

Issue: Would the Plan's approach to achieving high quality design in the Plan's three spatial areas and the individual policies be clear, justified, and consistent with national policy and would they be effective?

Introduction

1. This submission sets out the response of Littleton & Harestock Parish Council in respect of Matter 12 Policy D5. It should be read alongside its submissions on Matter 6 Policy W2 and Matter 14 Policy NE7.
2. The Parish Council does not oppose the redevelopment of the Sir John Moore Barracks (SJMB) site for 750 dwellings. However, it does have serious concerns regarding the impact of the scale of development proposed by Winchester City Council (WCC) on the character and natural environment of the area i.e. 900 dwellings (Policy W2). In particular it is concerned about the impact on the Winchester–Littleton Settlement Gap, Policy NE7, and the northern fields candidate SINC.
3. The Parish Council has been consistent in its objections to the scale of development proposed throughout the preparation of the plan based on its impact on the gap and ecology at both the Regulation 18 (November 2022) and Regulation 19 (August 2024) stages of the plan's preparation.
4. The Parish Council prepared a planning brief for the site in support of its representations on the Local Plan, available at <https://lhpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/LHPC-Planning-Brief-SJMB-v5-10Jul24.pdf>. This was circulated to Winchester City Councillors and its Planning Department, with a courtesy copy also sent to the DIO. Consistent with this response on the emerging local plan, the Parish Council has continued to participate in the DIO's engagement process for the preparation of its concept masterplan. This submission regarding Policy D5 has been informed through that involvement.

Strategic policy D5 Masterplans

Q1 Would strategic policy D5 be clear in its policy wording and supporting text as to what development would require a masterplan (para 5.70 states '...assessed on a site by site basis...', strategic policy D5 states at different parts'...on larger sites ... significant development on sites occupied by major landowners/users...) when they should be prepared, how they would be agreed by the local planning authority, and their status on that agreement? In this regard would the policy be clear and unambiguous so as to be effective?

Clear and unambiguous

5. The policy and text are clear, in as far as they go, in terms of setting the requirements for what a masterplan should consider. However, in some instances, it is repeating what is included in other policies of the plan whilst omitting others, such as any reference to blue and green infrastructure. Greater consistency here would be beneficial.

Timing of preparation

6. In respect to the timing as set out in paragraph 5.72 on page 98 of SD01, it is the Parish Council's view that a masterplan should follow on from the adoption of the local plan, which should set out the key planning requirements and before the submission of a planning application. The local plan should provide a clear framework enabling each decision-making stage to be informed by more detailed information and understanding of the site, and how best it can be delivered.
7. The Parish Council has difficulty understanding WCC's approach to the issue of timing that has been applied to the SJMB. We are in a position where a masterplan has been endorsed by the WCC in advance of the policy framework for the site being confirmed. The cart has been put before the horse.
8. The masterplan is in effect defining planning policy in respect of key land-uses, e.g. establishing the number of dwellings (900) and redefining the extent of the settlement gap.

Agreement by the local planning authority and status

9. WCC's approach has, from the Regulation 18 stage, been to defer key decisions on the development of the SJMB to a masterplan and rely upon Policy D5 and Policy W2 to be sufficient in providing the framework.
10. The approach of WCC is clear in terms of the role of masterplans. As set out in paragraph 5.71 page 97 of SD01: 'they should provide confidence for landowners and developers to bring forward schemes in accordance with the masterplan'.
11. The masterplan (ref ED12) was endorsed by WCC at its Cabinet meeting on the 12th February 2025. WCC has, in essence, delegated important land use decisions to a document which, by its own admission, has no formal planning status. Paragraph 3.1 of the report to Cabinet on 12th February 2025 stated: 'The concept masterplan as prepared will be a material consideration for development management purposes'. The lack of any formal planning status is a fundamental concern for the Parish Council.

Q2 Would its policy requirements provide appropriate flexibility so as to strike the right balance between ensuring high quality design and sustainable development is approved without delay?

12. The policy as drafted sets out a number of criteria which a masterplan should satisfy. They provide generic guidance to be applied to specific sites. In that context, the policy provides flexibility. The application of the policy should not result in a delay in delivering development as the work undertaken in support of a masterplan would also be needed to support a planning application.

Q3 Would this policy have a clear purpose, avoiding repetition in other Plan policies (e.g. site allocation policies and other design policies (strategic policies D1, D2, D3 and D4 in particular)?

13. The policy has a clear purpose, which is to require masterplans for important sites to be prepared to guide development. That purpose is clouded by the length of the policy, which in many instances repeats other policies in the plan.

Q4 Would the third paragraph of strategic policy D5 provide the necessary clarity to ensure effectiveness, in particular ‘... should be preceded by...’?

14. The policy would read better if the first paragraph included a reference to when masterplans were expected to be prepared in relation to a planning application, and the third paragraph introduced the criteria.

Q5 Given that the Plan should be read as a whole, what is the justification for strategic policy D5xiii, xiv and xv?

15. If the purpose of the policy is to direct the reader to key policies then either all the relevant policies should be included or none.

Q6 Would the requirements of strategic policy D5xiv accord with Plan policy CN3iv, in relation to all new residential development?

16. The criteria xiv) is only seeking an assessment of the potential for renewable energy schemes on site, whereas Policy CN3iv) sets a requirement for 100% on-site generation of energy for new residential development. Clarity on how the two policies are expected to be applied would be helpful.

Q7 Would the requirement for a management plan as part of the masterplan process be overly onerous?

17. It is appropriate that the long-term management of land and buildings, which have been necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, is established as part of the approval process. The requirement need not be overly onerous, i.e. it could cover the key principles and mechanisms that would be employed, leaving the details to be secured by other means, e.g. a section 106 agreement.

Q8 Should strategic policy D5xiii refer to green and blue infrastructure, for the purposes of soundness?

18. The inclusion of such a reference would ensure greater consistency of approach within the policy criteria.

Q9 Overall, would the policy provide the necessary flexibility to ensure that sustainable development is not unnecessarily delayed?

19. It is difficult to see how the policy, as drafted, would delay the delivery of sustainable development, given that is what it seeks to achieve.

This concludes our submission.