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## **Examination of the Winchester District Local Plan 2020-2040 (the District Plan/the Plan)**

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### **Inspector Note 14**

#### **Stage 2 (week 2) hearing agendas**

I sent out my matters, issues and questions for examination in relation to the first stage hearing session some time ago (ED13,17 and 21). In light of the responses received, I have produced an agenda for the stage 2 (week 2) hearing sessions.

The hearing sessions will only cover issues about which I require further information, having read all written submissions. I expect to go round the table once on each item. Rebuttals of others' contributions are not encouraged and I will act to prevent the repetition of points made by previous speakers. However, I may myself seek further comment in the interests of clarification, or where there is a matter that I need to pursue further.

**R Barrett**  
INSPECTOR

30 May 2025

10.00 Tuesday 3 June 2025 (Day 10)

## Agenda

*Inspector's opening announcements*

### **Matter 16: Creating a vibrant economy (including site allocations)**

**Issue: Would the strategy and provision for employment development and town, district and local centres be effective and justified and are the individual economic growth policies clear, justified and consistent with national policy, and would they be effective?**

*Inspector's opening announcements*

### **Employment and retail requirements**

1. With particular regard to the Employment Land Study [VE08] and Employment and Town Centre Uses Study (ETCUS) [VE03] is the gross additional need for employment land of between 27.6 and 37.8 hectares as set out in the submitted Plan justified by robust evidence?
2. Would the Plan provide for the type of employment land required? In particular, would it provide for the needs of offices (use class E(g)) and other employment land (use classes B2-B8) during the Plan period, taking account of existing commitments and proposed site allocations?

### **Strategic Policy E1 Vibrant economy**

1. The policy provides support for retention of appropriate premises and sites. Should the policy provide specific support for the redevelopment of existing employment sites as a source of additional employment provision?
2. Would the policy appropriately provide for activities outside the traditional office and industrial sectors? e.g. the education, health, retail and leisure and other service sectors?

### **Strategic Policy E3 Town centres strategy and hierarchy**

1. The town centre hierarchy, boundaries and primary shopping areas are justified by the Retail and Town Centre uses Study 2020 and the Employment and Town Centre Uses Study 2024 [VE02,03, 05 and 06]. Together, would they provide the robust evidence to justify the Plan's approach in this regard and would it accord with NPPF paragraph 90d?
2. Would the strategy provide the necessary flexibility for uses within town centres to maintain and enhance their viability and vitality?

### **Strategic Policy E4 Main town centre uses out of centre**

1. Would strategic policy E4 appropriately apply the sequential test in relation to development of main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor

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in accordance with an up to date plan? Would the requirements of a sequential approach be clear and unambiguous?

2. Would strategic policy E4 strike the right balance between protecting and enhancing the viability and vitality of the main town centres, and providing for small scale retail and leisure developments which provide a local facility/service on the edge and outside defined town centres?

### **Policy E5 Enhancing employment opportunities, Policy E6 Retaining Employment Opportunities**

1. Policy E5 confirms that employment development will be supported within settlement boundaries and sets out what the Plan considers to be employment uses. Would the uses defined within policy E5 at i-iii appropriately reflect the employment base in the District such as academic institutions, health etc?
2. Would policy E6 work to restrict the redevelopment of outdated employment sites/floorspace for modern employment purposes?
3. How would these policies interact with strategic policies E1, E2, E3 and E4? Together would they be effective in meeting the economic development needs of the District?

### **Policy E7 Maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres, Policy E8 Local shops, services and facilities**

1. How would policy E7 and E8, maintain the vitality and viability of town centres and provide for and retain essential local services and facilities within rural areas, be effective in its aim and would its approach be justified in accordance with the Plan's town centre strategy?

### **Policy E9 Economic development in rural areas, Policy E10 Farm diversification, Policy E11 Visitor related development within the countryside**

1. Would policies E9, E10 and E11, together, strike the right balance between supporting rural based businesses and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside?

### **Strategic Policy E2 Spatial distribution of economic growth**

1. Would the spatial distribution of economic growth accord with the Plan's spatial strategy as set out in strategic policy SP2?
2. Would the proposed site allocations for employment, mixed development and large housing development which include employment uses provide for the identified need for employment land as set out in strategic policy E1?

### **Winchester employment allocations**

#### **Policy W5 Bushfield Camp**

1. Given site constraints, including its location within a settlement gap, close to the South Downs National Park, its open green qualities, current use by the

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community, biodiversity and natural habitats and transport impacts, how has the developable area been defined (approximately 20 hectares)?

2. What is the justification for the site's development for high quality flexible business use and employment space, an innovation hub/education hub and creative industries? Given the commuting patterns in the District would this site deliver necessary social, economic or environmental development?
3. This site allocation is being carried over from the extant Plan. Given that it has not delivered yet, what evidence is there that it will deliver within the submitted Plan period?

### **Policy W6 Winnall**

1. In relation to sub areas 1 and 2, policy W6 seeks to ensure retention of existing industrial type uses and the creation of additional B2 and B8 floorspace. In so doing, would the policy be unduly restrictive, particularly in terms of retail and leisure sectors beyond traditional industrial uses? Should it provide greater flexibility e.g. employment generating uses outside B use classes, including retail, leisure and other sui generis uses?
2. Would the policy accord with other policies in the Plan, in particular policy E6, which aims to retain employment land and premises and employment opportunities?

### **Winchester learning and non-residential institutions allocations**

#### **Policy W10 Former River Park Leisure Centre site**

1. Are there any known barriers to development, including any restrictive covenants that could delay delivery within the Plan period?
2. Would the policy adequately control matters such as flood risk and the need to ascertain waste water capacity and phase development until delivery of necessary infrastructure?
3. Would the site contribute to the open space/recreation space requirements in the District? And if so in what way?

#### **Policy W11 University of Winchester/Royal Hampshire Hospital**

1. As the Council supports the retention and improvement of the existing hospital and university services, and at this stage the Plan does not provide indicative capacity for student or other homes, what is the purpose of the allocation of this site in the Plan?

### **SHUA**

#### **Policy SH4 Solent Business Park**

1. What is the justification for the use classes to be provided, height of buildings and a minimum of around 30% of the site to constitute parkland? Would it provide the necessary flexibility to ensure the amenity, sustainability and vibrancy of the Business Park?

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## **MRTAs**

### **Market Towns**

#### **Bishop's Waltham**

##### **Policy BW3 Tollgate Sawmill**

1. Would policy BW1 ensure protection of the setting of the South Downs National Park and appropriately address the need to promote sustainable transport infrastructure options?
2. This site is being brought forward for employment purposes, given its existing commercial use. On the basis of the potential provision of a GP surgery and market housing, limited to ensuring viability of the employment element, what is the evidence that underpins the policy's indicative capacity and its delivery in 2029/30?
3. Given that this site is carried over from the extant Local Plan, what is the evidence that it will be delivered with in this Plan period?

### **Intermediate rural settlements**

#### **Waltham Chase**

##### **Policy WC1 Morgan's Yard**

1. What is the evidence to justify its delivery in 2027/28? Given contamination constraints what is the evidence that this site would be viable for the type and capacity of development envisaged?

*Inspector's closing remarks*

14.00 Tuesday 3 June 2025 (Day 10)

## Agenda

*Inspector's opening announcements*

### **Matter 11: Carbon neutrality and designing for low carbon infrastructure**

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

#### **Policy CN2 Energy hierarchy**

1. Would policy CN2, when read with strategic policy CN1, serve a clear purpose?
2. 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?

#### **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. 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?
3. What is the robust evidence to justify the requirement for 100% on site renewable energy for energy consumption?

4. How have viability considerations been reflected in policy requirements, including any impacts on affordable housing provision and delivery?
5. What would be the effective monitoring and compliance mechanisms to ensure the successful implementation of the policy without hindering development progress?

## **Policy CN4 Water efficiency standards in new developments**

1. Would the water efficiency requirements accord with national policy, which sets a standard of 110 litres per person per day in water stressed areas?
2. How have viability considerations been reflected in this policy?
3. Given the viability implications of policy requirements, should the requirements be phased to ensure the right balance between safeguarding future water supply and ensuring planned growth is delivered within the Plan period? Would the policy provide necessary flexibility in this regard?

## **Policy CN5 Renewable and low carbon energy schemes**

1. Would policy CN5iv accord with national heritage policy?

## **Policy CN6 Micro energy generation schemes**

1. Would policy CN6 strike the right balance between promoting small scale energy production and conserving the District's historic environment?
2. Would policy CN6i accord with national heritage policy?

## **Policy CN7 Energy storage**

1. What is the aim of this policy?

## **Policy CN8 Embodied carbon assessment**

1. Would policy CN8 provide adequate detail on the process of producing an embodied carbon assessment, so as to ensure effectiveness?
2. Given the requirement for information on materials and construction methods, at what stage would an embodied carbon assessment be required? And would policy CN8 be clear in its requirements in this regard?
3. Given concerns regarding the amount and quality of data across the construction industry on the embodied carbon of any inputs, would the policy be justified and effective?

*Inspector's closing remarks*

**10.00 Wednesday 4 April 2025 (Day 11)**

**(To be held virtually)**

## **Agenda**

*Inspector's opening announcements*

### **Matter 17 Infrastructure**

#### **Infrastructure**

**Issue: What is the robust evidence to demonstrate that the Council has considered the delivery of infrastructure to meet the needs of planned growth and its timely delivery and would the Plan be effective in this regard?**

1. The IDP sets out the way in which infrastructure to meet the needs of planned development will be met. Is the methodology used robust and the findings reasonable and logical?
2. How have the findings informed the viability of the Plan?
3. The Plan does not include a specific policy/policies on infrastructure provision to meet development needs, rather each site allocation includes a generic policy, with specific criteria as appropriate. Would this approach be effective?

### **Matter 18 The Plan Viability**

**Issue: Whether the Plan is positively prepared and justified, effective and consistent with national policy in relation to viability?**

1. The Local Plan Viability Report July 2024 [V01] concludes that the Plan's approach and policy directions are viable on the whole. In addition, it concludes that sites will be able to come forward viably with the Plan policies in place. Is the methodology used for that study robust and fit for purpose and are its findings justified by the evidence?
2. Are the policy requirements such that the cumulative cost of all relevant policies would not undermine the deliverability of the Plan having regard to the types of development and sites proposed?

*Inspector's closing remarks*



10.00 Friday 6 June 2025 (Day 12)

## Agenda

*Inspector's opening announcements*

### **Matter 13 Sustainable transport and active travel**

**Issue: Would the Plan's transport strategy and the individual policies be clear, justified and consistent with national policy and would they be effective?**

#### **Strategic Policy T1 Sustainable and active transport and travel**

1. Is the Strategic Transport Assessment [ST15] based on a sound methodology and are the conclusions reasonable, in concluding that the quantum and distribution of the development proposed in the Plan, and the resulting transport impacts, are capable of mitigation at the strategic level?
2. How has the Strategic Transport Assessment, including its findings in relation to park and ride infrastructure, informed the Plan?
3. How has the concept and principles of '20 minute neighbourhoods' informed the Plan's spatial strategy as set out in strategic policy SP2?

#### **Policy T2 Parking for new developments**

1. Would policy T2, in providing 'parking provision assessment criteria', instead of parking standards, provide the appropriate level of clarity and certainty for developers and decision makers in relation to parking provision requirements?
2. Would policy T2i requirements for a design and access statement, transport assessment and travel plan capture all relevant development proposals? In requiring demonstration of how sustainable transport modes have been prioritised, would the policy provide the necessary clarity and would it be effective in reducing car parking levels and trip generation?
3. Does the Council anticipate adopting new residential parking standards as suggested in Hampshire County Council comments on the Plan?
4. Would the policy provide appropriate requirements and guidance in relation to matters such as assessing car parking demand, on street parking stress, parking and loading requirements for operational vehicles, the requirements for car parking management plans, the role for restriction of resident parking permits, as appropriate?

#### **Policy T3 Enabling sustainable travel modes of transport and the design and layout of parking in new developments**

1. Given the requirements of policy T2, would policy T3 serve a clear purpose in accordance with NPPF paragraph 16f?

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2. Would it adequately reflect the need to promote active travel modes as suggested in the policy title?
3. Would paragraph 6.33 repeat policy requirements in policy T2? What would be the consequence in terms of policy effectiveness?
4. Would the policy trigger, (all but householder) be appropriate and justified? Would the policy be effective in this regard?

## **Policy T4 Access for new developments**

1. Would policy T4 be clear and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals? In, particular should it include provisions to control access arrangements?
2. Would policy T4i in requiring connection to the nearest public transport stop be effective in supporting non-car modes of transport and to provide safe and attractive routes to, from and within a site?

*Inspector's closing remarks*

**Friday 6 June 2025 (Day 12) Morning**

## **Agenda**

*Inspector's opening announcements*

### **Matter 19 Monitoring**

**Issue: Whether the Plan would be able to be monitored effectively to ensure timely delivery of its proposals?**

1. How would the implementation of Plan policies be achieved? What mechanisms are there to assist development sites to progress?
2. How would the implementation of the Plan be monitored? Would it be effective? How would the results of monitoring be acted upon?
3. Overall does the Plan deal adequately with uncertainty?

*Council's closing remarks*

*Inspector's closing remarks*