

WCC closing statement:

- The government has made it very clear that Local Plans that are at an advanced stage of preparation can be progressed under the 'transitional arrangements' - this is exactly what the city council has done. If the government did not want plans to move forward under these transitional arrangements, they would not have included this provision.
- The city council believes that it has demonstrated throughout the examination process that the Local Plan will plan positively for the growth needed over the plan period. The key point that we would like to make is that this Local Plan is deliverable, effective and justified against the NPPF and the alternative options that were known to the city council at the various stages of the Local Plan making process.
- As to the start date, there is no guidance from the government in either the NPPF or the NPPG on what should be the start date of the Local Plan. In view of this, the start date of the Local Plan that is the subject of this examination has been based on sound reasons informed by the professional judgement of officers who know their district. There are many examples of other local plans that have gone through a Local Plan examination which include a start date which is several years in the past at the point of examination.
- Even if the Inspector does not agree with the start date of 2020 and we go for an alternative start date, the plan provides in full for Winchester's needs, we can still demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply for the purposes of Development Management and Plan-making.
- Moreover, whatever the start date, the plan makes a valuable contribution to meeting unmet needs in the PfSH area, exactly in line with the PfSH strategy; - provide an excess where possible in this plan cycle and then rely on supply from the 'Broad Areas of Search' and this was the basis on which this Local Plan was progressed. It is important to stress that all of the LPA's in Hampshire have a role to play in meeting any unmet housing requirements arising from PfSH – it is not just Winchester.
- It is important to stress that the city council has a good track record of delivering housing either through the market and from its own housing building programme - which are around 1,000 dwellings a year. To put this into perspective, our target under the new NPPF is 1,128 homes a year. This clearly demonstrates that the city council is not ducking away from delivering houses as this is something that they are used to doing.

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- In accordance with the NPPF we want to have a sound and up-to-date Local Plan which will guide future planning decisions and growth in the district. This is in the council's and local residents' interests and is exactly what we are trying to do under the government's transitional arrangements.
- Contrary to what has been said by some at the Local Plan examination, the Council considers the Local Plan is boosting the supply of housing as well as including an unmet need allowance of up to 1,900 dwellings. This has been supported by a robust Sustainability Appraisal/Habitat Regulation Assessment and a nutrients assessment which is a major issue in the district. The Council is also anxious, in order to maintain a sensible steady supply of housing, to be aware of the constraint that nutrient neutrality still presents and to prioritise brownfield sites, to maintain its policy of bring forward brownfield sites and not to permit new greenfield sites until 2030.
- To reiterate three key points that we want to leave with the Inspector.
 - 1) The city council has progressed this Local Plan for examination under the government's transitional arrangements – which is what the government wants LPA's to do;
 - 2) The city council is fully committed to adopting this Local Plan and Officers would start work straight away on the next Local Plan. There is an agreed budget in place and a Local Plans team that is ready to make a start on a new Local Plan; and
 - 3) We firmly believe that in accordance with the NPPF we want to have an adopted up-to-date Local Plan that identifies where development needs to go rather than planning by appeal.

Finally - Thanks:

- On behalf of Winchester City Council I would like to thank the Inspector for the professional way that she has conducted the hearing sessions.
- I would also like to thank the Programme Officer Jill Taylor, for the way in which she has co-ordinated the hearings and managed correspondence between all parties which is greatly appreciated.
- And finally, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the council's own team of officers and consultants for all their hard work, commitment, and dedication to progressing this Local Plan over a number of years.