

Winchester District Development Framework

Core Strategy – Issues and Options

December 2008

Strategic and Local Gaps

Analysis of Consultation Responses

Strategy for Gaps

Summary of Issues and Proposed Options

Within the Winchester District, the issues of formally identifying and subsequently maintaining important open areas between existing built-up areas have been important elements in development plan policy-making for many years. Such 'gaps' are, if kept in their present relatively undeveloped condition, capable of helping to maintain the visual identity and separate character of certain settlements which are in close proximity to one another. The protection of such gaps is particularly important where the intervening space is at particular risk of erosion through development, leading to the gradual coalescence of those built-up areas and a loss of their individuality and distinctiveness.

Within the comparatively urbanised parts of southern Hampshire there are particularly significant areas of open or undeveloped land which are of fundamental importance in terms of shaping the overall settlement pattern. Added to this, they perform a long-term role in providing extensive breaks between these large and complex built-up areas and may also bring other benefits for nearby communities as areas with recreation, amenity and/or nature conservation value.

Therefore, over time, particularly significant gaps of wider strategic importance have been designated as 'Strategic Gaps' by Hampshire County Council and put in place through its Structure Plans. In addition, a number of important 'Local Gaps' have been identified by the City Council and adopted through previous and current Local Plans.

As part of an overall approach to the natural environment, the Core Strategy set out three broad options for the matter of important 'gaps', in its Issues and Options consultation. The first of these was based on continuing with the current strategy, the second with undertaking a review of the value and coverage of existing gaps and, the third, to consider a fundamentally different policy approach to maintaining the District's settlement patterns. The Options table is reproduced below.

Option : 1 Retain Existing Approach	Option 2 : Review Function and extent of gaps	Option 3: Create an Alternative approach
Retain all the existing named strategic and local gaps, as defined in the adopted Local Plan	Consider amendment and/or deletion of some of the strategic and local gaps	Develop another form of policy approach to be used to maintain settlement patterns within the District

Public and Stakeholder Feedback

Public Workshops (January 2008)

The issues of development needs and the consequences of these for settlement patterns and the maintenance of separating gaps were discussed at the majority of the Issues and Options workshops. The resultant Workshop Report highlights a number of considerations which were raised by those present. Below are examples of the points made. The full Workshop Report can be viewed at: <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/Documents/LDF/Live%20for%20the%20future/workshop%20report.pdf>):-

- There is an important need to retain 'gaps', where these are necessary to maintain the character of individual settlements.
- Specific concerns were expressed regarding the harmful effect of some strategic allocations on existing gaps.
- It was felt that some of those strategic allocations, as broadly identified, could lead to urban sprawl.
- Existing settlements close to the proposed Fareham and Hedge End SDAs will need the specific protection of newly designated gaps.
- The development of the West of Waterlooville MDA and its potential Reserve make the retention of the Denmead-Waterlooville Gap imperative.
- Expansion of Winchester, to the north or south, will impact on essential gaps.
- Some existing gaps could be reviewed and amended, where appropriate, to allow for limited growth.
- If necessary, improvements to the rail infrastructure could be considered compatible with 'gap' protection.

Issues and Options Questionnaire

Question 22a of the Issues and Options paper asked which of the three options (see table above) people felt was the most appropriate for addressing the issues of settlement patterns and 'gaps' within the District.

A total of 660 responses were received to this question, including a number of responses from groups and societies on behalf of their members. 67% of all respondents chose Option 1, 25% specified Option 2 and 8% selected Option 3. Consequently, these numerical results provide a fairly clear conclusion as to which option is most acceptable locally.

Question 22b then asked "If you chose option 2, please specify which gaps should be amended or deleted". Question 22c asked "Are there any suitable alternative approaches that could be developed to shape development patterns within the District?"

Over 70 detailed comments were received in answer to question 22b and 92 to question 22c.

Summaries of all the responses to questions 22a, 22b and 22c are available separately, due to their size and can be viewed at www.winchester.gov.uk.

Annex 1 to this report groups those summaries that make relevant comments to this part of the plan, together with an officer response and a recommended action.

Other Considerations

This section summarises Government and other relevant advice, to provide a complete picture of the current status of the settlement gap issue.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

This PPS was published in August 2005 and sets out the Government's policies for the delivery of sustainable development relevant to planning authorities. "Plan policies and planning decisions should be based on the potential impacts , positive as well as negative, on the environment of development proposals (whether direct, indirect, cumulative, long-term or short-term) and a recognition of the limits of the environment to accept further development without irreversible damage". "Development plan policies should take account of environmental issues such as, "the protection of the wider countryside; the conservation and enhancement of wildlife species and habitats and the promotion of biodiversity; the need to improve the built and natural environments in around urban areas and rural settlements, including the provision of good quality open space..."

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

This PPS, issued in August 2004, sets out those Government's policies which apply to the rural areas, including country towns and villages and to the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringe of large urban areas. Included among its principal objectives is "To promote more sustainable patterns of development by: preventing urban sprawl and; promoting a range of uses to maximize the potential benefits of the countryside fringing urban areas".

With particular regard to the countryside (other than green belts) around urban areas, the PPS indicates that "local planning authorities should ensure that planning policies in Local Development Documents (LDDs) address the particular land use issues and opportunities to be found in the countryside around all urban areas, recognising its importance to those who live or work there and also in providing the nearest and most accessible countryside to urban residents..." In relation to the issue of local landscape designations, the PPS, at paragraphs 24 and 25, indicates that "carefully drafted, criteria-based policies in LDDs, utilising tools such as landscape character assessment should provide sufficient

protection for these areas, without the need for rigid local designations that may unduly restrict acceptable, sustainable development ...When reviewing their area wide development plans and LDDs, planning authorities should rigorously consider the justification for retaining existing local landscape designations. They should ensure that such designations are based on a formal and robust assessment of the qualities of the landscape concerned”.

However, it should be noted that, in the Council's view, settlement gap policies are intended for specific and well-defined functional purposes, relating to the separation of settlements and urban areas and do not, of themselves, represent a form of landscape designation.

South East Plan

As the Regional Spatial Strategy, the draft South East Plan was submitted to the Government in March 2006. Following this the Government published its Proposed Changes in July 2008 and has recently closed a twelve week public consultation.

The draft Plan contains a number of policies including one (Policy SH3) which applied the cross-cutting county wide policy CC10b, relating to Strategic Gaps, to the South Hampshire sub-region. The latter identifies seven locations where strategic gaps should be designated in LDDs, in order to prevent coalescence and protect the identity of settlements. All of these gaps are already identified as Strategic Gaps in the Hampshire Structure Plan.

However, following on from the draft Plan's Examination in Public, the Panel appointed to conduct the Examination reported back to the Secretary of State that it had reservations regarding the application of both the above policies: *“We have recommended amendments to policy CC10b in order to address concerns that it could be operated inflexibly, lead to the sterilization of large tracts of land between urban areas, and may not be necessary in its present form to address the planning issues affecting the urban fringe. The debate on Policy SH3 illustrated these concerns. On the other hand, we have no doubt that the strategic gap policies in the Hampshire Structure Plan are very widely supported by local communities and have helped to engender confidence that new development in the sub-region can be absorbed without losing the identity of existing settlements.”*

The Panel concluded, therefore, that *“On balance we consider that the settlement form of South Hampshire is likely to continue to merit strategic gap policies in the LDDs, but that the appropriate guidance on their designation and review should be contained within an amended Policy CC10b. This would ensure a more flexible policy approach that would protect the areas which are important for settlement shaping whilst not sterilizing more land than is necessary. In the case of South Hampshire, we consider that this may entail*

reviews of the boundaries of the existing strategic gaps referred to in Policy SH3.”

With reference to the issue of local gaps, the Panel also concluded that “For the avoidance of doubt, we do not find any justification for inclusion of references in the draft Plan to the potential for the identification of local gaps. These are matters to be addressed in LDDs.”

Responding to the EIP Panel’s recommendations, the Secretary of State put forward Proposed Changes which delete both policies relating to gaps: CC10b and SH3. retain changes to the draft South East Plan. In regard to the issue of managing the built environment, modifications to the draft Plan therefore indicate that under Policy BE4: ‘The Role of Small Rural Towns’ ”Local Planning Authorities, through their Local Development Documents and other means should [*inter alia*] protect and enhance the character and appearance of individual small rural towns.” In the modified policy’s supporting text it is further noted that “Individuality is the key to the success of market towns.”

With particular regard to South Hampshire the Secretary of State’s modifications included the statement that: “South Hampshire has a dense and complex settlement pattern and accommodates a population of nearly a million people. Within the urbanised parts of the sub-region there are substantial areas of undeveloped land. If local authorities in South Hampshire consider the inclusion of local gaps as essential in terms of shaping the settlement pattern, this policy approach will need to be tested through Development Plan Documents.”

Strategic Development Areas within South Hampshire

For the period after 2016 the Regional Spatial Strategy for South Hampshire will, according to the Secretary of States Modifications, additionally provide for the delivery of greenfield development concentrated in two Strategic Development Areas. These will be located at:-

- 1) Fareham Borough, to the north of the M27 motorway, comprising up to 10,000 new homes and;
- 2) to the north and north east of Hedge End, comprising up to 6,000 new homes.

In setting out Policy SH2 which provides the necessary framework for bringing forward these two allocations, specific reference is made to the following:

“To prevent coalescence of the SDAs with neighbouring settlements and in order to protect the separate identity of individual settlements, areas of open land will be maintained between:

- i). the Fareham SDA and Wickham/Funtley/Knowle*
- ii). the North/North East of Hedge End SDA and neighbouring settlements*

The precise boundaries of these areas of land will be defined in Development Plan Documents to include land which has a predominantly open and/or rural appearance. The open land will be selected to respect the identity of the existing settlements while ensuring that opportunities for sustainable access to services and facilities in the SDA and the adjacent urban areas are not prejudiced. Only land necessary to achieve these long term objectives will be included. Within these areas, built development will not be allowed except for small scale buildings which cannot be located elsewhere and which are essential to maintain established uses within the areas of open land, or to enhance their recreational value”.

Hampshire Strategic Partnership – Hampshire Sustainable Community Strategy

‘Shaping Our Future Together’, the Hampshire Sustainable Community Strategy, includes the Vision that ‘*Hampshire continues to prosper, providing greater opportunity for all without risking the environment*’ together with eleven long-term ambitions. These include providing an environment for business growth and investment, providing necessary infrastructure and services for economic and housing growth, meeting social and affordable housing needs and conserving and using natural resources more efficiently. The County Council formally adopted the Strategy in September 2008 and this now forms another part of the backdrop to Winchester’s Spatial Vision.

Winchester District Strategic Partnership - Sustainable Community Strategy

The Sustainable Community Strategy (March 2007) is based on five key outcomes in terms of what is required to deliver its vision. These outcomes are:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Safe and Strong Communities
- Economic prosperity
- High quality environment
- Inclusive society

As part of a high quality environment, achieving and subsequently maintaining sustainable communities which benefit from their own sense of individuality and distinctive local character can potentially have a positive bearing on several of these outcomes.

Sustainability Appraisal

The Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper assessed Strategic and Local Gap issues, as part of its consideration of achieving and maintaining a high quality environment. With regard to Gaps, the Appraisal commented, as follows.

“Winchester is a predominantly rural district that is valued by the resident population for providing a high quality environment. Diverse countryside is widely regarded as one of Winchester’s most valuable assets, as is its network of parks and green spaces. The Regional Spatial Strategy and the Winchester Community Strategy place open space and access to open space as a priority. Option 1 supports this commitment by retaining existing strategic and local gaps. However, Option 1 is less able to progress social objectives for housing and the community, as it prevents development in areas where coalescence has been perceived to be undesirable.

Option 2 supports the intention and spirit of strategic gaps whilst applying a more considered approach. In particular, option 2 provides acknowledgement that while there is a need to maintain both the character of landscape and settlements, not all development can be realistically accommodated in existing built up areas (Winchester LDF Green Infrastructure Technical Paper, 2007). The assessment indicates that change can support and progress key SA objectives when undertaken in an appropriate manner.

Option 3 cannot be comparatively assessed as an alternative without policy specifics. Other policy options may include the total removal of a strategic gap/local gap policy and the introduction of green corridors or wedges, based on locally specific landscape features and biodiversity interest”.

Background to and Current Status of the District’s Strategic and Local Gaps

Formally designated gaps have been a feature of successive Structure and Local Plans relating to the Winchester District, including the currently adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review. Hampshire County Council, through its Structure Plan (Review), made clear the distinction between strategic and local gaps. That distinction has been carried through into Winchester’s Local Plan Review.

Consequently, both existing plans recognise that the function of strategic gaps is to prevent urban areas merging into one another and to maintain the principal breaks of open and undeveloped land between built-up areas. In contrast, the function of local gaps is to preserve the separate identities of smaller settlements at risk of coalescence with other settlements. To reinforce this distinction, each plan sets out development control policies which are tuned to the characteristics and requirements of different gaps.

The County Structure Plan (Review) designates a ‘Meon Strategic Gap’, a good deal of which lies within the Winchester District and comprises land between Whiteley to the west and the River Meon to the east, with Fareham beyond. Following the functional distinction made in the Structure Plan and outlined above, the Local Plan Review defines, in Policy CE.2, the following Local Gaps within the District:

- Bishops Waltham – Swanmore – Waltham Chase – Shedfield – Shirrell Heath
- Denmead – Waterlooville
- Kings Worthy – Abbots Worthy
- Otterbourne – Southdown
- Winchester – Compton Street
- Winchester – Kings Worthy/ Headbourne Worthy
- Winchester - Littleton

Policy CE.3 then goes on to specify that development within strategic and local gaps will only be permissible if it does not physically or visually diminish the gap in question and thus undermine its function.

Issues Arising and Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives

The results of the consultation process, along with the developments in national and regional policy identified above, point to the need to consider the policy options in more detail than originally posed. The table below examines in more detail the possible advantages and disadvantages of the main alternatives for the consideration of settlement pattern and gap issues. This picks up on any reasonable alternatives suggested in response to the Issues and Options consultation, but also adds in other alternatives to ensure full consideration of the range of options available.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
Issues and Options Proposed		
<p>Maintain the current approach in the adopted Local Plan and continue with the existing named strategic and local gaps</p>	<p>These areas of land have been identified and their value in maintaining the separation of individual settlements has been endorsed in successive development plans.</p> <p>In terms of controlling development and effectively preventing coalescence, they provide a clear and well established planning mechanism.</p>	<p>The designation of all current strategic and local gaps within the District pre-dates the Draft South East Plan and its proposed Changes.</p> <p>Therefore, in their present form not all these gaps will necessarily conform to the latest expressions of government policy.</p>

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Consider and examine amendments to/deletion of some of the strategic and local gaps.</p>	<p>A review of the function and extent of existing gaps would be in line with policy directives in the Proposed Changes to the South East Plan and current Government advice.</p> <p>Such a review would also provide an up-to-date assessment of development pressures in those areas subject to the risk of coalescence and the most appropriate measures to address these.</p> <p>Reduction/deletion could bring forward new opportunities to place development in well-related locations immediately adjoining sustainable settlements.</p>	<p>Significant reduction in size and/or deletion of strategic or local gaps would result in sole reliance on a countryside designation in the LDF.</p> <p>This would result in less protection which might place the adjoining settlements at a greater risk of coalescence and loss of identity and could result in secondary adverse effects for local biodiversity and landscape character.</p>
Other Alternative Approaches		
<p>Consider making new and/or enlarging existing designations for strategic/ local gaps, in order to anticipate the additional development pressures which will result from strategic allocations, including those of SDA scale.</p>	<p>It will be necessary for any review of gap strategy within the District to take account of these additional pressures.</p> <p>The South East Plan requires open areas of land to be maintained between the SDAs and nearby settlements.</p>	<p>Any additional coverage by expanded or new gaps would need to be fully justified. Taking the two SDAs as an example; establishing the precise form and location of these through the preparation of 'Area Action Plans' would be a necessary precursor to determining the need for and precise extent of, new or enlarged gaps. Such Action Plans would need to consider displaced and cross-boundary effects and would involve joint working with adjoining authorities.</p>

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
Green 'lungs' are more important than gaps and should be protected by open space, landscape and wildlife policies	The concept is a useful one and conforms to the recreational, open space and green infrastructure aspects of the Core Strategy.	Challenging to define 'on the ground' and may, in practice, lead to the creation of areas similar to gaps but with a less specific purpose and one which does not incorporate the protective function inherent in strategic and local gaps .

Conclusions and Recommended Response

Responses to the consultation showed clear and widespread support for the retention of both strategic and local gaps, in essentially their present form and number, in order to continue to protect those settlements thought to be most at risk from ongoing development pressures and the likelihood of gradual coalescence.

Notwithstanding this, the responses also demonstrated significant support for reviewing and, in some instances, realigning policy on settlement gaps, to take proper account of the Local Development Framework's need to comply with current Government guidance and the policies and targets set out in the South East Plan. These cover not only housing provision but also such matters as retail, office, leisure and industrial development. Such support was, in some instances, based on the view that the challenges currently faced are of different order to those presented through previous plan-making cycles and will, therefore, require more innovative and pragmatic solutions.

In addition, there was a good deal of support for the introduction of new gap designations, in order to protect the integrity, individuality and distinctive character of smaller District settlements, situated in the vicinity of the Strategic Development Areas at Fareham and Hedge End. In regard to the Fareham SDA, support was given to gap designation which, in particular, protected the separate identities of Wickham and Knowle. In the case of the Hedge End SDA, support for a new designation focused on the perceived threat to the identities of Durley, Durley Street and Bishops Waltham.

With regard to the existing Denmead-Waterlooville Gap, there was considerable support for its retention, partly as a reflection of the additional pressures expected to result from the implementation of the programmed Major Development Area at West of Waterlooville. However, there were also some expressions of support for a re-appraisal of this Gap's current boundaries, in order to open up the possibility of some further development adjacent to the sustainable location of Waterlooville.

With regard to Winchester and its outlying settlements, several of which are protected by existing gaps, particular concerns were expressed at the prospect of a step-change strategy which could impose additional pressures resulting from an expansion of the built-up area. In general, responses favoured keeping existing local gaps to the north and south of the city although, once again, others argued for a review of such gaps and a more generally flexible approach, to adapt to future needs and circumstances.

In terms of notably different 'alternative' approaches to the maintenance of settlement patterns and gaps, few positive suggestions were put forward. There was repeated support for reviewing most, in not all, gaps. However, there was little support for ceasing to identify either strategic or local gaps and relying simply on the protection of a countryside designation.

In the light of the Sustainability Appraisal, any policy alternative centred on the rejection of the strategic and/or local gaps referred to, above would place the adjoining settlements at risk of undesirable coalescence and loss of identity. However, without expressing a comparative assessment, the Appraisal does acknowledge one other policy option which might involve the removal of strategic/local gap policy and the introduction of green corridors or 'wedges', based on locally specific landscape features and biodiversity interest.

Overall, it is concluded that appropriate settlement gaps express and put into effect an urban separation policy. They are not considered to be an alternative form of landscape designation of the kind referred to in the South East Plan. Elsewhere, the South East Plan specifically calls for the definition of separating gaps adjacent to the proposed Strategic Development Areas at Fareham and Hedge End.

Therefore, according to the regional Plan, gaps can be considered relevant and necessary in areas of significant growth, where they can be regarded as a valid mechanism for shaping the settlement pattern. In response to this it is maintained that overall growth requirements within and around Winchester and in the southern parts of the District are at least as high as those generated by previous development plans. Consequently, settlement gaps to maintain character and identity and prevent the coalescence of individual settlements are still considered necessary.

However, this is a complex issue and it is anticipated that, over the next few months, further work on the detail of a Core Strategy policy will be necessary in order to ensure that a formal settlement gap policy can meet the need of Government guidance and the Regional Spatial Strategy for 'a robust assessment' and, thereby, satisfy the 'tests of soundness'.

It will also be necessary to ensure that the Core Strategy's policy aligns with other policy areas within the Core Strategy, including those on settlement hierarchy and housing provision.

Recommended Approach

To adopt a composite of the Options set out in the Issues and Options document, so as to emphasise the importance of retaining existing and in the case of the two SDAs creating new gaps, where such gaps are essential to protect against the coalescence of nearby settlements and maintain their identity and distinctive character in the long term.

At the same time, such a composite should acknowledge that a review of the function and extent of the District's existing gaps would most effectively prepare them to face renewed challenges in the future and provide robust protection for settlements at risk of coalescence without undermining or unreasonably frustrating the legitimate needs of development.

Annex 1: Key points arising from comments received to Question 22b “If you chose option 2, please specify which gaps should be amended or deleted”

Key Points (common issues are grouped)	WCC Officer Response	Suggested Action
<p>It is important to maintain the gaps, otherwise villages will merge into one another, and there will be no sense of community or village life.</p> <p>All green area gaps should be retained, regardless of demands, as closing these gaps will be detrimental to the land infrastructure, resulting in more flooding by people, traffic and water.</p> <p>There is no support (or logic) for changing existing strategic gaps. The District Council must sustain this position, or else it is again flying in the face of strategic objectives 1 and 3.</p> <p>No more building on named strategic and local gaps. Preserve green space for future generations. It cannot be replaced. You have a great responsibility to save it.</p> <p>Consider amending and reducing some Gaps maybe, but do not delete any.</p>	<p>These comments are noted. It is intended that the resulting policy will achieve the necessary level of protection to achieve this widely supported objective.</p>	<p>Include appropriate policy in the LDF Core Strategy.</p>

Key Points (common issues are grouped)	WCC Officer Response	Suggested Action
<p>Options are too narrow, some gaps should be increased and strengthened and others reduced but dependent on local plans.</p> <p>No specific amendment or deletion but consider it should be re-looked at in the light of MDAs and SDAs and decisions on Winchester's own development.</p> <p>All gaps should be reviewed. The edge of existing settlements are invariably the most sustainable locations for new developments.</p> <p>Need to review gap policy, to ensure it accords with PPG17.</p> <p>Agree that these gaps are vital to the feel and amenity of the area - but should not necessarily remain static forever. This does not mean I agree with a slow erosion of them - but rather the absolute opposite. As towns and villages change then they can become even more important.</p> <p>Gaps should only be amended where appropriate and pursuant to a detailed assessment</p> <p>The need for the Bishops Waltham/Swanmore/Waltham Chase/Shedfield/Shirrell Heath Local Gap must be re-assessed. If a local gap is still needed between all of these settlements it should only include the minimum amount of land necessary to maintain their separate identity. Land at Clewers Lane/Clewers Hill, Waltham Chase should be excluded from the local gap.</p>	<p>The evidence suggests that an appraisal of the function and extent of existing gaps is necessary, in order to conform to the requirements of Government guidance and the South East Plan and to undertake a timely review to prepare for future development challenges.</p>	<p>Include appropriate policy in the LDF Core Strategy.</p>

Key Points (common issues are grouped)	WCC Officer Response	Suggested Action
<p>The extent of the Bishops Waltham/ Swanmore/ Waltham Chase Local Gap needs a thorough review, in order to ensure that it does not unnecessarily frustrate well located development which could come forward, to achieve the development objectives within The Framework, without compromising the objectives of the local gap.</p> <p>Reduce the gap between Bishops Waltham and Waltham Chase to allow for development to reduce commuting levels.</p> <p>The gap between Waterlooville and Denmead should be reviewed to allow some additional development on the edge of Waterlooville.</p> <p>Retain and increase local gaps, to prevent the coalescence of settlements. Designate green wedges adjoining settlements, to facilitate walking in the countryside without needing a car.</p> <p>Option 1 could increase the carbon footprint. A green lung is more important than a gap and this should be protected by open space, landscape and wildlife policies.</p> <p>Enhance the Denmead/ Waterlooville gap. Add a Denmead/ Hambledon local gap. Work with HCC to restore the gaps in the PUSH area, and don't use the criterion that both settlements must have a population of 10,000. This criterion does not prevent the coalescence of villages with towns, which gaps are designed to stop.</p> <p>The gap between Denmead and Waterlooville is considered particularly important to maintain</p>		

Key Points (common issues are grouped)	WCC Officer Response	Suggested Action
<p>Particularly need a well defined gap between Wickham and the new Fareham SDA. This is the southern boundary of WCC and contiguous with Wickham Parish boundary. The SDA will reach right up to this boundary and WCC must set aside a section of the land to keep a distinct separation between Wickham and the new SDA. Local gaps may also be needed around villages to maintain their identity.</p> <p>Wickham PC supports the provision of significant green gaps between Knowle, Wickham and the Fareham SDA and also supports the retention of the Meon Strategic Gap.</p> <p>In order to keep Wickham a vibrant integrated rural community, it is imperative that the gap between Wickham and Knowle and Wickham and the North Fareham development be preserved.</p>	<p>An effective gap to the north of the Fareham SDA to preserve the identity of Wickham and Knowle and prevent coalescence with the SDA is the recommended course of action.</p>	<p>Include appropriate policy in the LDF Core Strategy..</p>

Key Points (common issues are grouped)	WCC Officer Response	Suggested Action
<p>Although I have ticked option 1, which has worked well, I think there should be a local gap between Bishops Waltham and Durley.</p> <p>Local gaps are vital. Include more strategic gaps, especially between the PUSH SDA and Bishops Waltham. Also between Wickham and Bishops Waltham.</p> <p>The gap between Bishops Waltham and Durley. If housing was to come towards the upper part of Durley (ie. Durley Street, Winters Hill) then maybe we would have normal things such as pavements and street lights and even a shop.</p>	<p>As with land to the north of the Fareham SDA, a similar gap is required north of the Hedge End SDA, in order to protect the identity of settlements which might otherwise be threatened by coalescence and loss of distinctiveness. To carry out the necessary work, to identify the most effective 'gap' to achieve this, is the recommended course of action. However, the precise extent of such a gap and, specifically, the location of its northern boundary have also to be determined.</p>	<p>No further action but see main report</p>

Key Points (common issues are grouped)	WCC Officer Response	Suggested Action
<p>Some gaps should be deleted as they are a gap in name only. One obvious location is at the Winnall roundabout opposite Tesco which is ideally situated for housing developments with the existing infrastructure.</p> <p>This would give scope for amending/deleting some of the districts local gaps. Development at Bushfield camp would not need to compromise the function or effectiveness of a Winchester - Compton gap</p> <p>Amend local gap between Winchester and Kings Worthy because of Barton Farm and consider reducing the gap between Winchester and Littleton.</p> <p>Amend/delete Kings Worthy - Abbots Worthy Local Gap</p> <p>In order to facilitate the step change option for development at Winchester the Abbots Barton/Headbourne Worthy gap should be deleted.</p> <p>Deletion of gap between Otterbourne and Compton/ Shawford. Amendment to gap between Otterbourne and Hursley.</p> <p>No deletions, but should like to see Colden Common - Twyford and Colden Common - Fair Oak as additional named local gaps.</p>	<p>.</p> <p>As with settlements located in the southern part of the District and which form part of the South Hampshire sub-region, the evidence suggests that an examination of the function and extent of existing gaps around Winchester and its neighbouring settlements is desirable, in order to conform to the requirements of Government guidance and the South East Plan and to undertake a timely review, in order to prepare for anticipated development challenges.</p>	<p>No further action but see main report</p>

Annex 2: Key points arising from comments received to Question 22c “Are there any suitable alternative approaches that could be developed to shape settlement patterns within the District?”

Key Points (common issues are grouped)	WCC Officer Response	Suggested Action
<p>Enhancing the quality of life should be a key issue with the retention of the rural character of the villages and the reduction of intrusive noise and light pollution.</p> <p>"Green gaps" are essential to preserve local character and minimise climate change and damage to tourist income. Should only be considered when all else has failed.</p> <p>Limit major developments to already large urban areas and permit only very limited development, in local or key hubs. Refurbish derelict sites and use these to fulfil the housing requirement. Both would limit carbon emissions by encouraging businesses to invest where there is already a labour force and by making the provision of services and public transport easier and more cost effective.</p> <p>Gaps will inevitably have to be reviewed if planned growth is to be accommodated. The focus should be on protecting the intrinsic character of different settlements (where this exists), including key vistas etc.</p>	<p>These general points and suggestions for alternative action are noted. A number have, however, been referred to in terms of this report. Others relate to issues already considered, as part of the emerging settlement hierarchy and development strategies for the District.</p>	<p>See main report, but ensure that these comments are fed into further work on this policy area.</p>

The relationship of Hedge End and the SDA is important and brings forward many cross - boundary issues. In the context of the expanded settlement to be created it is important that any gaps are reconsidered, to ensure delivery of the most appropriate and sustainable development possible.

Some small settlements with large areas of green space around them could consider extending their boundaries. Parish Councils could propose housing of the same character to neighbouring properties at the end of a settlement or a second property on a large site, or an exception site with 25% commercial properties at a boundary point.

The distribution of strategic development requirements and subsequent review of settlement boundaries will be considered through the normal LDF process. Once settlement boundaries have been adopted, everything beyond them would normally fall under countryside restraint policies. As a result, there appears little merit in creating an additional policy constraint that essentially reiterates normal countryside restraint policies.

Allow settlements to grow organically without too much "shaping". The current shaping at Junction 7 of the M27 has Courts, Furnitureland, Halfords old site and Powerhouse all lying empty for many months. A step by step cautious approach is far better to meet needs incrementally.

Define a clear green belt which limits the southern sprawl. This might be for example 1 mile to the north of the M27. No new major developments to be permitted outside of this area.

Knowle has recently been developed and this area could easily be extended. There would also be ample space to provide small business units.

Form a larger settlement by joining Knowle to the 10,000 new houses to be built North of the M27. A rail link is there and there is plenty of space for businesses, shops etc.

Wickham is identifying a 'zonal' approach to village development, based on southern approaches to be protected, with limited housing in a northern zone. This just identifies the need for avoiding "blanket" approaches and to be site sensitive.

Wickham: Rather than allocating land on the south side of Wickham, allocate land on the east side of the A32, to add a small amount of residential accommodation near/around the parish church, so that the church becomes more in the village than on the edge. Allocate land adjacent to the church to create a community facilities area. The A32 road junction would need to be widened.

Some portions of the gaps could be sacrificed to stem the horrific tide of back yard building, which is destroying existing communities.

Believe very strongly that the whole issue of strategic and local gaps needs revisiting. It is crucial that new gaps are identified to safeguard areas that currently act as important green buffers, but which are at risk from development. Eagle Star's efforts to gain approval for a large new settlement at Micheldever is a classic example. The area between Basingstoke and Winchester has always been viewed as an important green buffer by county and local authorities, but without statutory protection, it will always be at risk. WCC supported its inclusion as a strategic gap during the SE Plan process, and we urge it to designate the area formally within the LDF.

Develop new towns such as Micheldever.

The reintroduction of small hamlets in the rural areas would lessen the load of building elsewhere.

Adding a few houses all round the area would not alter the pattern much.

Need to review gap policy to ensure it accords with PPG17.

Be as flexible as needed. Some gaps may become neglected. They need to be actively managed and be a positive influence on the local environment, or it may be that a gap is better treated as brown field and be more appropriately built on.

<p>Avoid development in Flood Risk Areas. This also increases flood risk nearby and, in 2007, the Environment Agency indicated that any 'flood risk' development could raise insurance issues.</p>		
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Strategic/local gaps have no impact above normal countryside restraint policies, so should not be used.