

# Plans for Places...*after Blueprint*

June 2011

## **Introduction – The Story so Far...**

The purpose of this document is to reflect on the response to the Council's 'Blueprint' consultation exercise. It considers the responses to Blueprint from both residents and businesses, and suggests how we might structure development across the District over the Local Development Framework (LDF) timescale – which is up to 2031. At the next stage these would need to be translated into more formal planning policy to be taken forward in the Core Strategy - the lead LDF document. Taking account of all the comments made, and the evidence from various studies and analysis of data, 'Plans for Places' sets out in non-technical terms what the City Council thinks the policies for the Core Strategy might be. We would like you to consider and give us your feedback on what it says before anything is finalised.

'Blueprint' sought views on the issues affecting the Winchester District over the next twenty years and how they should guide the way in which we allow development to take place - this is known as 'place shaping'. In simple terms we asked **'what do you want your place to be like in twenty years time?'**

Blueprint generated a coherent community response to complex issues affecting the District and showed that taking a locally-based approach would work as a way of considering the future of the places in which people live, this is in line with the Government's approach promoted through its Localism agenda.

We want those views to be taken into account in the Council's emerging LDF and in particular the Core Strategy. The LDF system introduced in 2004 allows Councils to respond to the most important planning issues in their areas, at different times, through the preparation of a series of documents which will gradually replace old style local plans, which in Winchester's case is the Winchester District Local Plan Review adopted in 2006.

Some of the responses raised issues beyond the scope of the planning system to resolve and the Council's Community Planning officers will be liaising with local groups and Parish Councils to explore the most appropriate ways of addressing these. Some of the responses went into more detail than we need for the Core Strategy, but where they help to provide a vision of the future, they have been useful in looking at higher level issues. The more specific opportunity to take these matters forward where appropriate will be presented during the preparation of the Development Management and Allocations development plan document which will follow the Core Strategy, or through Community or Neighbourhood Plans.

## **Progress on Our Core Strategy**

There have been a number of changes to key elements of the planning system since publication of our original Core Strategy 'Preferred Option' document in 2009. Various other policy considerations will be updated and amended, as necessary, but as the underlying principles have not changed since publication of the Preferred Option document these are not discussed unless they were raised as a common concern through the consultation process.

A further issue is that a significant part of the District now lies within the South Downs National Park which became the Local Planning Authority for that area on 1 April 2011. This document has been agreed with the National Park Authority so people living in the National Park area should respond to it. Eventually the National Park Authority will devise its own distinct planning policies but for the time being there will be only one Core Strategy covering the whole of Winchester District.

It is very important to get a new Core Strategy agreed. The existing Local Plan was approved over five years ago and some of the policies contained in it no longer reflect local or national priorities and concerns as well as they should. There is also the need to provide a positive flexible planning framework for guiding sustainable development across the District that will ensure that the District remains an attractive place over the next 20 years or so. Later elements of the LDF will be required to be in conformity with the Core Strategy and it will also set out the strategic guidance and context for the Neighbourhood Plans which local communities can produce.

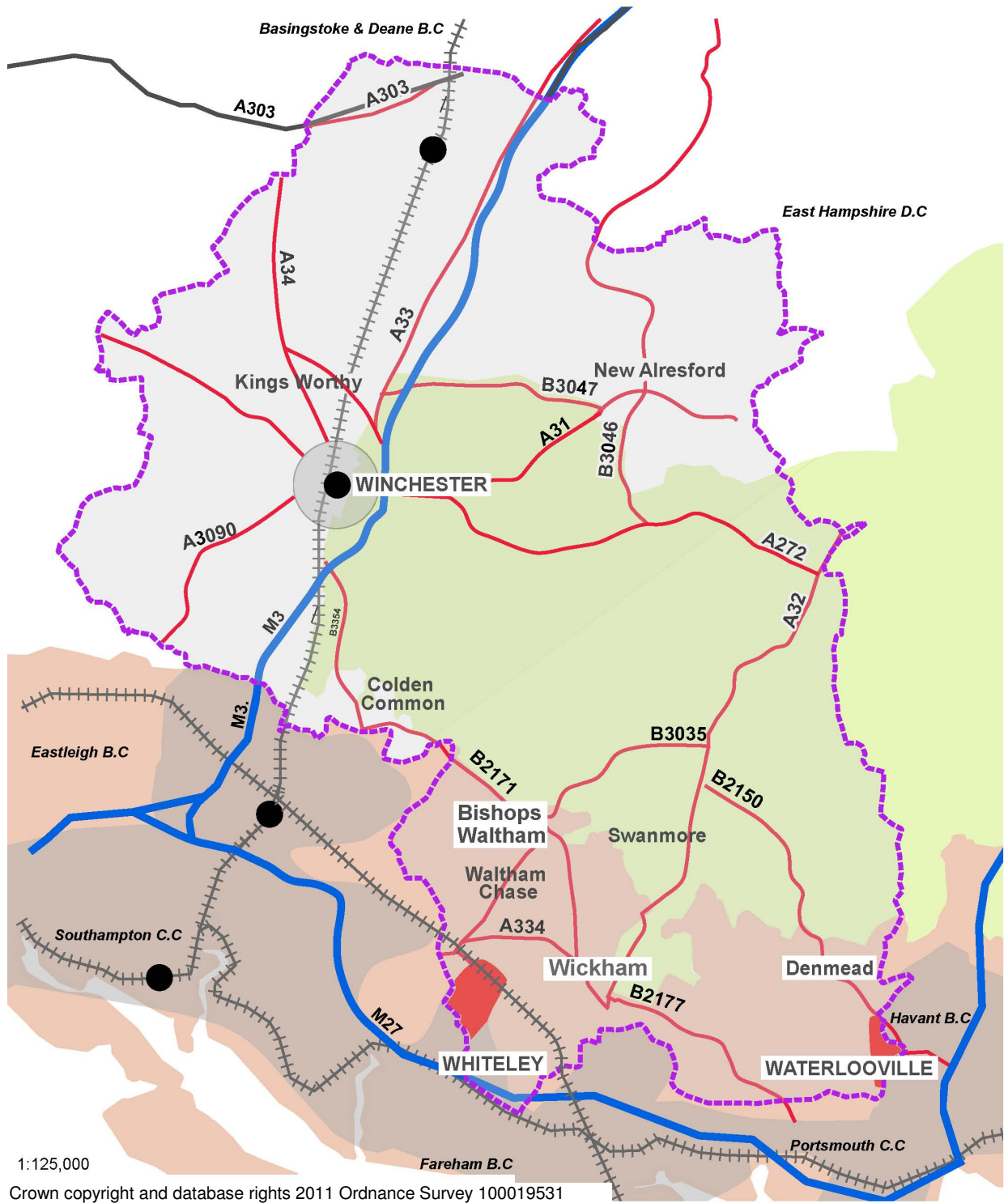
The Winchester LDF will be influenced by many other plans and strategies and this is crucial to ensure that the LDF takes into account the various elements that impact on the lives and businesses of individuals and communities within the District. At present national planning policy statements advise on a variety of matters, these are in the process of being amended by Government and the Core Strategy will be required to take existing and subsequent guidance into account.

The geographical position of Winchester means that it has a common boundary with a number of neighbouring local authorities, as illustrated on the map below.

This map also illustrates the extent of that part of the District that now lies within the South Downs National Park, as well as the part that falls within the sub-regional Partnership for Urban South Hampshire area (PUSH).

The following sections include a brief overview of the District and how the LDF is required to link with the Council's Community Strategy; the places that make up the District and the proposed development strategies to be applied taking into account technical evidence and the responses to Blueprint.

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- Key:**
- Railway Station
  - ▭ Winchester District Boundary
  - Motorway
  - Main roads
  - ⊕ Railway
  - ▭ South Hampshire Urban Areas
  - ▭ Winchester Town
  - ▭ PUSH Area
  - ▭ South Downs National Park
  - ▭ Market Towns and Rural Area
  - ▭ Proposed Strategic Allocation Sites

## **Winchester District Overview**

The Core Strategy is the way in which we try to ensure that the development which takes place in the District achieves the objectives set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Winchester District Community Strategy was updated in 2010 and looks forward to 2020. As part of this, the outcomes have been revised and reduced from five to three, focussing now on:-

- Active Communities
- Prosperous Economy and
- High Quality Environment

The existing strong relationship between the emerging Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy is illustrated in the way that we distinguish between the different parts of the Winchester District.

Given the varied and diverse nature of the District, having a single District-wide policy approach would not be appropriate. Three areas are identified reflecting the key characteristics of the District:

1. Winchester Town (the historic core and immediate surroundings of Winchester itself);
2. South Hampshire Urban Areas (focussing on the southern urban parts of the District, particularly Whiteley and the development area at West of Waterlooville).
3. Market Towns and Rural Area (covering all the market towns, smaller villages and rural area)

This approach reflects the concept of localism and place-shaping across the District. It recognises local characteristics and the relationships between settlements and has received support through previous consultations. We think this is a reasonable approach and do not propose to change it.

The South Downs National Park covers a large part of the rural area of the District as illustrated on the previous map. This introduces some new challenges because the National Park has some very specific purposes that will influence all policy considerations. That part of the District that falls in the National Park is also within the Market Towns and Rural Area, where the existing approach to planning uses a pro-active settlement strategy to promote/encourage development in the most sustainable locations. It is the intention that, given the functional relationships between settlements, the principles of applying a rural settlement strategy will be consistent with the philosophy of the National Park designation and that this approach is retained. The National Park boundary does, however, bisect a number of rural parishes and includes part of some Winchester wards as it extends up to the urban edge of Winchester at Winnall, Bar End/Highcliffe and St. Cross

### **Statistics...what do they tell us?**

The strategies set out in this document seek to achieve a balance between the views of local people and businesses, as they have been expressed through Blueprint and the messages that the technical evidence and statistics provide.

Since we published our Preferred Option document in 2009, there has been a major recession and as a result the Council has updated a number of its technical studies in relation to the economy and retailing. In addition it has been necessary to roll forward population and household projections to 2031 and to re-adjust the Plan period from 2006 – 2026 (in accordance with the South East Plan), to 2011 – 2031 to allow for the Core Strategy to provide at least 15 years of planning policy certainty post adoption (as required by Government policy).

The District's housing requirement was originally set out in the adopted South East Plan: to provide for 12,240 new dwellings in the period 2006 – 2026. This was then split between PUSH and non-PUSH parts of the District as 6,740 and 5,500 dwellings respectively. The Government's intention to remove this layer of planning guidance has yet to be finally resolved through the Localism Bill, but the intention is that targets such as how many houses to build should now be locally derived.

Blueprint was a response to this, to allow local people to discuss the needs of their local communities looking ahead 20 years or so. Whilst, the many comments from Blueprint acknowledge the need for development – particularly for certain sectors of communities such as older people, few suggested the number of new homes that should be built.

A Housing Technical Paper has been prepared which examines in more detail a range of scenarios for population and housing change. This forms part of the Council's [evidence base](#). This considers the assumptions, aspirations and current/future policy guidance, as these factors also influence and direct the amount of new homes that should be planned for.

Using the most recent 2008-based Government projections, which are produced for each Local Authority area and based on trends in births, deaths and migration as a starting point, a set of population projections has been produced which have resulted in a projection of the number of dwellings needed. This number of dwellings would be required should the population projections and assumptions incorporated be realised. The following tables set out the population projections and corresponding number of dwellings required up to 2031, broken down into 5 year periods:

**A. WINCHESTER DISTRICT SUMMARY STATISTICS****Government Projections Scenario (projected figures rounded to nearest 50)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2031</b>
<b>Population</b>	107,220	112,924	<b>117,050</b>	<b>119,200</b>	<b>124,000</b>	<b>129,100</b>	<b>133,600</b>
<b>Dwellings</b>	44,420	47,079	<b>49,300</b>	<b>51,200</b>	<b>54,200</b>	<b>57,350</b>	<b>60,300</b>
<b>Econ. Active</b>	54,867	57,780	<b>59,450</b>	<b>59,900</b>	<b>61,600</b>	<b>64,200</b>	<b>66,000</b>

**B. WINCHESTER DISTRICT POPULATION AND DWELLING CHANGE Government Projections Scenario (projected figures rounded to nearest 50)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>2001-06</b>	<b>2006-11</b>	<b>2011-16</b>	<b>2016-21</b>	<b>2021-26</b>	<b>2026-31</b>	<b>TOTAL 2011-31</b>
<b>Population Total</b>	5,704	4,114	<b>2,150</b>	<b>4,800</b>	<b>5,100</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>16,550</b>
<b>Dwellings</b>	2,659	2,213	<b>1,900</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>3,150</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>11,000</b>
<b>Econ. Active</b>	2,913	1,663	<b>450</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>6,550</b>

In summary, using these projections the population of the District will increase by 16,550 during the period 2011 - 2031, creating the need for some 11,000 dwellings in the same period. Having examined other scenarios that might be used to derive housing needs (as set out in the Housing Technical Paper) we have come to the conclusion that a requirement of 11,000 dwellings, as shown in the table above, is the most reasonable basis for future planning.

It is important to note that this conclusion is not driven by housing numbers, rather the number of houses is determined by the needs of people that are expected to live in Winchester District and will need housing. If we do not provide new dwellings for the expected population changes, the result will be higher property prices (which is bad for affordability), more overcrowded conditions for some, and less choice for people whose life circumstances change.

The way in which the suggested District target should be split into the three sub-areas is summarised below and discussed in more detail in the Housing Technical Paper and later sections of this document.

Both Winchester Town and South Hampshire Urban Areas are by their urban nature, centres of employment and commerce, as well as population. They are well connected to surrounding areas and have a functional relationship beyond their immediate boundaries. They have higher levels of existing populations and accordingly form the upper level of the settlement hierarchy within the District. On this basis we think it is sensible and desirable that the largest part of the 11,000 requirement is met in these areas.

In the South Hampshire Urban Area, the Core Strategy Preferred Option, proposed two strategic housing allocations at North Whiteley and West of Waterlooville. Since then, planning permission has been granted for the

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development at West of Waterlooville for 3,000 new homes (approximately 2,500 in Winchester District). Work is in progress for the proposal to develop the land to the north of Whiteley, which will include about 3,000 new homes (the exact number to be fixed by the masterplanning work) and the provision of key infrastructure, which we consider remains the right approach. About 5,500 new homes can therefore be provided in Winchester District through these two strategic developments and will make a significant contribution to the overall District-wide requirement in a way that also contributes to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire's (PUSH) economic growth strategy.

Winchester is the main existing urban area within the District and has the best range of facilities, services, connectivity, etc. It is also of great historic importance, with key environmental constraints affecting parts of the town and its setting. It should, therefore, be a focus for development, but primarily to meet its own needs and the pressures on the town, and to help maintain and develop its economy. We believe that housing provision in Winchester should reflect its proportion of the District population, due to the sustainability of the town as well as the constraints on it, resulting in a target of approximately 4,000 dwellings.

The remainder of the District falls within the Market Towns and Rural Area where the balance of the housing requirement of 1,500 dwellings should be met. New Alresford and Bishops Waltham are the two largest settlements and responses to Blueprint recognised that they have a wider role acting as service centres for a number of the settlements nearby. This spatial area also includes a number of locally-important service centres and a substantial portion falls within the South Downs National Park.

The Housing Technical Paper includes housing projections for the National Park, but the planning strategy for this area needs to reflect its special status. Therefore, it is proposed that there should not be a separate dwelling requirement specifically for the National Park, but that provision is included within the figure for the whole of the Market Towns and Rural Area. Similarly, part of the PUSH area defined in the South East Plan falls within the Market Towns and Rural Area and does not have a separately defined target.

This would give the following breakdown by sub-areas of the District:-

Spatial Area	Number of new dwellings 2011 - 2031
Winchester Town	4,000
South Hampshire Urban Areas	5,500
Market Towns and Rural Area (incl SDNP)	1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,000</b>

We think this housing distribution reflects the function and characteristics of the District, in a way that will provide the right number of new homes in the



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most appropriate locations over the next 20 years, do you agree with this or is there another way to distribute the housing requirement?

In addition to housing requirements, there is also a need to provide land for other key land uses such as employment and retail. The 2010 updated Retail Study (NLP 2007) looks forward only to 2026 (given the uncertainty of planning for retail developments over a longer timeframe) and concludes that across the District some 36,000 sq metres (net) of A1 retail floorspace will be required over and above existing commitments, taking into account expenditure projections etc. This District total is then distributed as follows :-

Class A1 Retail Floorspace Projections (Baseline) to 2026			
Location	Type of Floorspace sq.m (net)		
	Convenience	Comparison	Total
Winchester Urban Area	2,783	19,703	22,486
Winchester Rural Area	1,686	3,522	5,208
Whiteley	216	8,614	8,830
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,686</b>	<b>31,840</b>	<b>36,524</b>

The need for growth in retail floorspace was not a factor highlighted through the responses to Blueprint, although many acknowledge the need for viable shops and services and recognised the value of a visitor economy.

The other major user of land is employment and it can be expected that over the course of the plan period, businesses will change, as will working practices. The Economic and Employment Study undertaken by SQW in 2007/2009, is in the process of being updated to take account of the recession and its likely impact on economic and housing projections.

The 2007 Economic Study concluded that there was a need for about 85 hectares of B1 –B8 land across the District between 2006 – 2026, sub-divided as follows :-

Overall additional employment needs				
Estimated land needs in Hectares	B1 office and high technology	B2 light and general industrial	B8 warehousing and distribution	Total
M27 corridor	40.5	-0.7	9.2	49.0
Winchester Town	20.0	-1.8	2.7	20.9
Rural area	13.5	-1.7	2.6	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>-4.2</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>84.4</b>

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These pre-recession requirements may need to be reviewed when the results of the updated economic study are known. Blueprint responses acknowledge the need for changes in the provision of employment premises, particularly for the need for smaller units as starter units, coupled with cheaper rents and rates which are factors beyond the control of the LDF. There was also the recognition of the need to balance employment and housing growth to address commuting.

## **The Places....**

### **Winchester Town**

#### **Introduction**

The county town of Winchester is well connected and functions as a hub for many services and facilities for its residents and businesses and those in the wider District and beyond. It is also the District's largest built-up area and these factors mean it generates substantial housing and economic needs and make it a sustainable location for growth and change.

It has a strong economy, with opportunities for further growth in a wide range of economic sectors, including the knowledge and creative industries. Responses to Blueprint agreed with this and also told us that other economic opportunities should be explored, including the potential for low carbon industries, the role of the Universities, and tourism. We agree with these suggestions and wish to develop a strategy for Winchester Town that allows these to happen in the right amounts and appropriate locations. These will also broaden the economic base of the Town which is currently heavily reliant on the public sector, which is subject to ongoing changes as a result of spending cuts and the recession, the full impact of which are still unknown. Winchester Town also has a strong retail and tourism sector, although planned retail growth has yet to happen given the wider economic conditions.

A key characteristic of Winchester Town is its setting and quality of the built environment, together with being a compact city within well defined boundaries. Many Blueprint responses emphasised these features are highly valued and seen as key to its future prosperity. As a place of employment, provider of retail and leisure facilities, together with having wider public transport connections, over and above providing homes, education and healthcare to a large proportion of the District's population, it also has a pivotal role in providing for the future needs and aspirations of its residents, businesses and visitors. The challenge for us is to ensure that it retains a balanced and growing economy as well as providing a range of homes and associated infrastructure.

In terms of infrastructure provision Blueprint comments refer to a number of transport related matters and the Town Access Plan currently being prepared will pick up some of these and translate them into options and actions. A key area where there is no consensus is the use of car parks – some responses suggest that these are vital for the economy and should be retained whereas others suggest that they should be redeveloped.

The Core Strategy Preferred Option expressed a strategy for Winchester Town incorporating a vision which stated :-

***The vision for Winchester Town is to focus on providing a range of accommodation to meet the needs of the whole community and to ensure that the local economy builds on its existing and growing strengths in higher education, creative and media industries, and other***

***knowledge-based activities, whilst respecting the town’s special heritage and setting.***

We believe the general the principles expressed in this vision remain valid but it is how it would be delivered that needs further exploration, given the above commentary and the fact that a decision about development of the site at Barton Farm, north Winchester will now be taken by the Secretary of State for Communities.

Previous Consultations

The role and future of Winchester Town has been debated on a number of occasions during the preparation of the Core Strategy to date. Most recently, responses to Blueprint concurred with many of the views already raised and highlight a range of matters which fall under the broad topic headings of housing, employment and community. The following table provides a sample of the common issues raised (some of which may conflict):-

Housing Matters	
Key issues raised	Suggestions / more specific requests
<u>Types of housing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need for low cost/affordable housing</li> <li>• need for mix of homes</li> <li>• housing for aging population</li> </ul>	provision for local people; redevelopment of Council owned land for affordable/low cost housing; provision of family homes; housing for single professionals; housing for vulnerable people; housing for students and new graduates to remain in the City; Various types of people all competing for 2/3 bed homes; specific provision for older people through – retirement village in city centre; retention of bungalows; larger flats (2 beds, larger kitchens); provision of care homes
<u>Where will the housing be provided</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brownfield vs greenfield options</li> </ul>	acknowledge a degree of development is necessary if housing needs are to be met; require small new developments not big new suburbs; re-use areas of city centre and industrial land incl car parks for housing; retain compact city and well-defined urban edge; retain and protect character of the City; develop at higher densities ; allocate a large greenfield site as a mixed use urban extension to provide necessary infrastructure and affordable housing and relieve city centre facilities; Need to push the envelope and grow Winchester

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Employment	
Key issues raised	Suggestions / more specific comments
<u>Common Concerns:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resolve commuting issue</li> <li>• provision of affordable businesses premises</li> <li>• determine the economic role of Winchester</li> </ul>	Correct balance of jobs available and the resident working population; Reduce rates/rents to encourage entrepreneurs and new businesses; Support improvement of business infrastructure – broadband, business advice  Explore opportunities for knowledge and creative sectors; opportunities for green / low carbon industries; role of tourism/culture; role of Universities;
<u>Where will the employment land be provided?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brownfield vs greenfield options</li> </ul>	Encourage re-use of vacant buildings Allocation of land for a technology/knowledge park
Community	
Key issues raised	Suggestions / more specific requests
transport	retention vs redevelopment of central car parks 20 mph limits and other restrictions priority for pedestrians and cyclists improved public transport – more frequent, cheaper
social provision (health, education etc)	retention and improvement of facilities for young, elderly, vulnerable groups
green infrastructure	retain and replant trees protect green wedges/open spaces
design and energy efficiency	Promote high quality creative and sustainable architecture Sustainable – energy efficient new and old buildings – particularly housing

We think that generally speaking the majority of the above are reasonable concerns which could be achieved through a variety of mechanisms, indeed many are not reliant on the planning system for delivery.

A key issue is how much growth and change to plan for up to 2031, whether for new housing, employment or other uses, and how/where this would be delivered. Although some responses to Blueprint said that Winchester should not grow outside its existing boundary, others recognised the need for more development to address some of its acute shortcomings, particularly in

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relation to housing need and the provision of more affordable homes. Despite the lack of consensus on this issue, the Core Strategy must reach a clear conclusion and set out a pragmatic and realistic strategy for Winchester.

### Housing, Employment, Retail and other land use requirements

The District's housing requirements summarised in the previous section, (and set out in full in the Housing Technical Paper), indicate that as the District's largest and most sustainable settlement Winchester Town should provide for about 4,000 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031. This will allow the Town to provide for the population changes anticipated over the next 20 years, and to allow for the economically-led growth that is essential for it to at least maintain its existing economic function.

Many comments on Blueprint referred to the need to remain within the Town's existing boundary through utilising existing redevelopment and infilling opportunities, higher densities, development on car parks and re-use of buildings currently used for employment purposes. We agree some of these sources will provide for part of the housing and commercial requirements but we do not believe it can accommodate all of them. This is especially true when it is remembered that the strategy is not just about housing provision, there is also the need to consider the other land uses that will be required to come forward during the plan period to ensure a balanced and sustainable economy and community.

Existing sources of housing provision can be assessed through an examination of the most recent (2010) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which indicates for Winchester Town that some 363 dwellings could be provided during the period 2011 – 2026. There are few large sites with planning permissions that are not in the process of being implemented (698 dwellings potentially) and some 118 dwellings which would come from the implementation of planning permission on small sites. With the Plan period now extending to 2031 there is justification for allowing for some similar, currently-unidentified, sites to come forward in the longer term. But this still leaves the need to find more land for housing to meet the full 4,000 dwellings requirement.

Some residential development opportunities may come forward through development on sites such as car parks, other publicly owned land and policy intervention through the implementation of higher densities, and giving priority to the reuse of vacant employment sites/buildings for residential purposes. There is also the suggestion that by bringing empty homes back into use this would make a significant contribution to the overall housing supply. In any urban area there will be a degree of vacant homes, many of which will be temporarily vacant due to housing transactions. There is no evidence of any more than a small number of long-term vacant dwellings in Winchester, with most vacancies being due to the normal turnover of the housing stock. Therefore few, if any, vacant dwellings that are re-occupied could be considered as new homes and counted towards the expressed targets.

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The table below provides an estimate of how many additional dwellings may come forward in Winchester Town from various sources, including through the potential use of the public surface car parks for housing development and increasing the density of SHLAA sites. We recognise that there may be additional sites that could come forward over the Plan period and will need to make allowance for these (in addition to the figures below). However, given the sources that have already been considered this is likely to be a modest amount.

### Potential Housing Sources Within Winchester Settlement Boundary

<b>Existing Source</b>	<b>Estimated dwellings</b>
Dwellings with Planning Permission – large and small sites	812
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment sites (SHLAA Dec 2010)	363
<b>Potential Source/Measures</b>	
Increase density of all SHLAA sites outside city centre to 75dwellings per hectare (previously 50dph)	150-200
Include public surface car parks in town centre at 75dph (excluding constrained areas)	100-150
Include public surface car parks outside town centre at 75dph (excluding constrained areas)	250-300
Other Winchester City Council-owned assets at 75dph. (not already in SHLAA, e.g. Avalon House, Bar End Depot)	25-50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1700 -1875</b>

The table above not only illustrates the potential sources of sites within the Town's boundary but also attempts to quantify their capacity. Therefore, we believe the capacity within the existing settlement boundary of Winchester is likely to be in the range of 1,500 – 2,500 dwellings, depending on how vigorously any intensification policies are pursued and taking account of possible longer-term windfall sites.

There is a view, which was reaffirmed through Blueprint, that these sources would be sufficient to meet the long term housing needs of the Town, so that the existing Town boundary could be retained. However, the table above shows that, even with an allowance for other windfall sites, the capacity of these sources falls far short of the 4,000 dwellings requirement, even without providing for commercial, community, etc needs.

All of these mechanisms have consequences that need to be acknowledged and discussed to ensure the outcomes are fully understood, for example trying to achieve higher densities on all sites coming forward may have detrimental consequences on character and street scene and be viewed by many as 'town cramming' and 'garden grabbing'. Many residents are already concerned that this may be happening and are likely to oppose this outcome because of its perceived harmful effect of the character of various parts of

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Winchester. There must also be provision for growing the economy and providing additional retail floorspace. This creates additional pressure either on existing sites (which can only be used once) or for greenfield releases.

Furthermore, the impact on existing infrastructure must also be considered. Winchester has experience over the past years piecemeal development, the impact of which is now being felt on the local infrastructure such as capacity of primary school places and availability of health and community provision. The scale of housing growth to be achieved through intensification and re-development needs to be considered in light of infrastructure capacity and opportunities for improvement, for example the provision of a new primary school may be desirable suitable and available sites may also be attractive for housing or other purposes which have a greater land value.

In terms of additional space for economic development the Winchester Economic and Employment Land Study (SQW, 2007) identified the need for between 14- 20 ha of additional employment land in Winchester. This was not only to address existing employment requirements through companies wishing to expand, but to also to provide for significant growth in the knowledge and creative sectors. These have been identified as an economic development opportunity that Winchester would be well placed to focus on, given its already natural emphasis on these sectors, its strong relationship with the Universities and its history as a place of learning. However, since the Economic Study there have been major changes in economic projections for growth and potentially within the local economy.

A snap shot survey in late 2010 identified that about 30,000 sq metres of commercial floorspace (excluding retail) was available in the town. This varied from self contained office or industrial buildings to small offices within existing buildings or workshops as part of larger units. Since then, more office buildings have been vacated in the town as a result of one of the town's key employers Hampshire County Council contracting. Therefore, whilst a range of commercial/business floorspace exists, there is the issue of whether it is suitable for modern business needs to address changing working practices and the opportunities to promote those economic sectors that Winchester has natural strengths in. Given these factors, there is a need to up date the economic work to provide a more relevant set of projections of economic growth to 2031, which may result in a need to update the estimated employment land requirement of 14-20 hectares.

A further development issue is the need to maintain a healthy retail economy, as this is key to the overall attractiveness of the town to both residents and visitors. A 2010 update of the 2007 Retail Study (NLP), reveals that the Silver Hill development and other commitments (Aldi at Weeke) are expected to accommodate growth needs in the short to medium term up to 2016. However, in the longer term post 2016, retail projections indicate a further need for up to 22,486 sq metres (net) of retail floorspace. There is, therefore, a requirement to identify suitable land/sites for this land use to be delivered (for comparison - the Silver Hill development covers an area of 2 hectares and includes 10,427 sq m gross of retail floorspace within a mixed use development). The identified amount of additional retail floorspace cannot be



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addressed in isolation and needs to be examined in light of further economic and community requirements, to ensure that all potential benefits can be exploited. Indeed this requirement places a further demand on town centre sites, including the need for car parks to be considered for redevelopment.

The amounts of both housing and economic/commercial development are therefore key to the future of Winchester Town. Just taking the projected amounts of employment and retail land/floorspace alone will have a significant impact on the capacity of the existing urban area to accommodate it. If this is then added to the housing need, it becomes more apparent that to retain the existing urban edge to the Town would harm the character of the areas within the boundary and fail to meet the reasonable needs of the Town.

Indeed this situation was anticipated by the Future of Winchester Study in 1999, which concluded that

*“there will come a point when continued development within the built-up area becomes more harmful to Winchester’s important characteristics than expansion of the built-up area. The city will then have to consider developing beyond its current boundaries if it is to reconcile a number of issues...”*

Despite some strongly-held views against expansion of the town boundary, we cannot agree that this is realistic given the finite supply of development opportunities within the existing urban fabric and Town boundary.

The following table lists the above key land requirements and identifies potential sources, to illustrate the limitations on space within the existing boundary to accommodate these requirements:-

Land use	Area required	Potential sources
Housing 4,000 dwellings	@40 dwellings per hectare =  100 ha minimum. Land requirement could be as high as 200 ha; taking land for open space, access and community requirements into account can double the land required.  (For comparison the Barton Farm site covers 93 ha (gross) and would provide 2000 homes).	SHLAA = 363  Sites outstanding with planning permission = 816 gross  Other redevelopment (brownfield) opportunities such as infill; car parks; re-use of commercial/industrial land = 525-700  Allowance for currently-identified sites  Increased densities  = Approx 1,500-2,500
Employment	14-20 ha	Re-use/re-develop vacant office and industrial

## Plans for Places

		buildings (approx 30,000 sq metres currently available), Surface car parks could make up an additional 15,000 sq metres (approx) in the Town centre, if not developed for other uses.
Retail	Minimum 2ha	Unidentified Town centre redevelopment opportunities – shops, offices  Car parks  Local centres/out of centre
Open space – green infrastructure	Unspecified – need to address existing under provision + provision to meet future needs	Greenfield land as no significant sources within the existing settlement boundary
Access and infrastructure	Unspecified – will depend on the policy for vehicular access to the central area	Car parks
Total	Minimum = 116 -222 ha (net)	

This snapshot clearly illustrates the quantum of land required to meet the development needs of Winchester Town itself, looking ahead to 2031. There are some development proposals in the pipeline that will be implemented during the early part of the plan period, but the strategy for the remainder will need to be identified and planned for. A further observation is that, whilst some of the potential sources could be used for a number of purposes e.g. town centre car parks, obviously the supply of these is finite. The total amount of land needs to be considered as a minimum requirement as it is expressed as a net figure where all incidental space associated with the various developments is excluded. This space is however highly valued by many, being vitally important in terms of design and layout, to ensure that the appearance and integrity of the key qualities of the Town are not destroyed.

Some Blueprint responses suggest that Winchester's needs could be spread around the towns and villages that look to it for employment and services. We feel this is not sustainable or desirable and would be contrary to the premise of each location addressing its own needs and requirements whilst maintaining its special characteristics. Also, the strategy proposed for the

## Plans for Places

Market Towns and Rural Area already seeks to ensure that the towns and villages around Winchester meet their own needs.

Other comments suggest the 'do nothing' approach and not to actively plan for the future. We do not consider this is feasible or desirable. There are a number of reasons for this, but basically failing to provide for future needs, whether for housing, retail or employment, will only lead Winchester to decline and its attractiveness as a place to live and work to diminish.

Therefore we believe that Winchester can and should provide the recommended share of housing and commercial development and that 1500 - 2500 new homes and corresponding employment and retail floorspace could be provided within its existing boundary.

If the decision in August by the Government allows the Barton Farm proposal to go ahead then this would provide:-

- 2000 dwellings (to include 40% affordable housing);
- a local centre including: a new primary school, a children's pre-school nursery, a retail food store up to 2000 sq m, a community building, a health centre, a district energy centre, car parking and other commercial, leisure and community floor space.
- formal and informal recreational spaces; land for allotments; hard and soft landscaping;
- park and ride facility for up to 200 cars;
- provision of on- and off-site infrastructure necessary to facilitate development of the site.

It would still also be necessary to consider:-

- employment opportunities which could be provided through:
  - re-use of existing commercial premises for commercial uses
  - provision of small scale business premises on sites with re-development potential within the existing boundary
  - a programme of improvement and redevelopment at Winnall or Bar End and the release of a greenfield site for knowledge industries;
- retail opportunities which could be provided through;
  - redevelopment of suitable sites in the town centre
  - consideration of edge of centre sites
  - more retail development at existing local centres dispersed through the town (such as at Weeke)
- community and social infrastructure which could be provided through:
  - additional health, education and other provision will be required, to be funded where possible via developer contributions and implemented through the extension of existing provision or the identification of additional land for such purposes
- open space to be provided for all new developments and through land allocations, as well as secured as other opportunities arise
- improve vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access taking account of the emerging Winchester Access Plan

On the other hand if the Barton Farm appeal is dismissed it would be necessary to plan for alternative provision which could include:-

- housing opportunities
  - a presumption in favour of re-using all suitable and available sites for housing purposes – including infill; car parks, surplus public land; commercial land
  - require all sites that come forward to be developed at the highest feasible densities to achieve the required number of dwellings,
  - allocate a large greenfield site or a number of smaller greenfield sites for housing development – (small sites do not have the ‘economies of scale’ that larger sites can offer so may not be able to include on-site education, health and community facilities)
- employment opportunities
  - maximising the use of existing employment sites through redevelopment and conversions,
  - release of a greenfield site or sites for a range of employment provision, including a knowledge park, to compensate for the use of employment land within the settlement boundary for housing
- retail opportunities
  - retail provision will need to focus in the first instance on town centre locations;
  - retail development at local centres
  - edge of/out of centre retail development
- Community and social infrastructure
  - additional health, education and other provision will be required to be funded via developer contributions and implemented through the extension of existing provision
  - given the additional scale of provision required this may need the identification of additional greenfield land for such purposes
  - a piecemeal approach to development could also reduce the opportunities to address infrastructure provision and wider issues such as climate change and the desire to become a low carbon economy.
- opportunities to provide open space will be limited given the competing needs on limited amounts of land and there will be pressure to use open spaces for development. Open space could be allocated outside the settlement boundary but this might be more difficult to implement and less convenient for those it is intended to serve.
- improve vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access in accordance with the Winchester Access Plan. Given the many competing land requirements in the central area, vehicular movements will require sensitive and even radical handling to ensure those with an operational need for vehicular access have priority for access at the appropriate time and non- essential traffic is restricted.

This alternative highlights the potential lack of land to achieve not only the amount of growth required to address the recognised needs but also to ensure that the character of Winchester is not demonstrably harmed. A critical issue with this approach is the impact on infrastructure. Given the piecemeal development that has occurred in Winchester over many years, some of the Town's key services may need to expand or move and this strategy would not assist this situation, causing greater demand and limiting opportunities for improvements.

In conclusion, we think we can achieve considerable development for a variety of uses within the existing settlement boundary but, even so, this will fall well short of what we anticipate is needed to achieve the various requirements for the Town. Therefore, we believe that it is not a realistic option to retain the existing boundary of the town, as it would not be possible to find the land needed for development given the existing constraints of the Winchester urban area.

This raises the need to make difficult decisions, but the Core Strategy is the proper means to consider holistically the future of Winchester Town and actively plan for both the amount of development needed and the desires and aspirations of the residents and businesses that enjoy it so much.

## **South Hampshire Urban Areas**

### Introduction

The South Hampshire Urban Area is a local response to planning for the part of the District which lies within the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) area, where the development strategy focuses on new development concentrated to form new urban extensions, to deliver the following spatial vision for the area:

**The vision for the South Hampshire urban areas is to develop a series of sustainable new neighbourhoods/communities to contribute towards meeting the PUSH strategy of improving economic performance by providing major economic and housing growth. There are a limited number of locations on the fringes of the PUSH urban area which provide sustainable opportunities for large-scale, high quality housing, economic development and associated uses.**

Responses to Blueprint and other consultations lead the Council to believe that the best strategy is to plan for the proposed urban extensions, rather than dispersing similar numbers amongst the smaller settlements which also lie within the PUSH boundary. There is understandable concern about the impact of the development at North Whiteley on the rural area, in particular its impact on wildlife and local habitats. A major new development will change part of the developed area from natural to built environment; it would be false to suggest otherwise. But the area has been identified as a possible location for development for many years and if all the relevant issues can be dealt with properly through the development process then the Council considers this to be an acceptable change.

The Council supports the updated PUSH economic development strategy and proposes to play its part in meeting this by development at two strategic sites at West of Waterlooville and North Whiteley. These would deliver a substantial proportion of the District housing requirement already established as well as providing the necessary infrastructure set out in summary below.

West of Waterlooville (whole site)	• Housing	– About 2,500 units max within Winchester District (40% affordable) out of a total development of 3,000.
	• Transport	– Junction and access improvements, pedestrian and cycle links, enhanced public transport services.
	• Schools	– Pre-school – 2 Primary Schools
	• Health	– A new surgery and health centre
	• Openspace	– approximately 73Ha of the site as informal openspace

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- Formal sports and play facilities
- Community – Possible new community centre

Not all of the site has a full planning permission, therefore the number of units within Winchester District has not been finalised.

- North Whiteley
- Housing – About 3,000 units (40% affordable)
  - Transport – Junction and road improvements, pedestrian and cycle links, bus priority measures and infrastructure, contributions to public transport services.
  - Schools – Pre-school  
– 2 Primary Schools  
– 1 Secondary School
  - Health – New GP practice
  - Openspace – Public space in accordance with the Core Strategy policies will be provided
  - Community – New community centre.

A planning application has not yet been submitted for North Whiteley and this list is therefore for guidance only at this stage.

Given the sensitivity of the land at North Whiteley where some of the adjoining land is categorised as a Special Area of Conservation and/or Special Protection Area, there is a requirement to assess the proposed development under the European Habitat Regulations. The consortium of developers promoting the site are working with the Council and the statutory agencies to ensure that all the necessary procedures are followed and appropriate mitigation measures are included as necessary. A development of this scale will take time to plan and will be subject to lengthy discussions and negotiations with thorough community consultation.

A substantial proportion of the wider PUSH growth requirement is being planned by Fareham Borough Council to be located in a new North Fareham Strategic Development Area (SDA). Whilst this lies outside the District and beyond the direct control of Winchester City Council, the scale of the development (in the region of 7,000 dwellings) may have an impact on the Winchester District settlements immediately adjacent to the administrative boundary.

It is essential that a clear defensible and long-term gap is retained between the SDA and settlements in Winchester District. The City Council will seek to ensure that the future SDA masterplan includes part of this land within Fareham Borough and will plan for all of the land in the Winchester District (between the Fareham boundary and Wickham and Knowle) to remain in its existing open countryside form in perpetuity. We believe that this land could provide some of the 'green infrastructure' associated with the SDA, provided

## Plans for Places

this does not change the undeveloped rural character of the land and would secure its long-term retention as an open gap.

A further SDA was being planned to the north/north east of Hedge End for some 6,000 dwellings, covering land in Eastleigh Borough and Winchester District, in accordance with the requirements of the South East Plan. Given the notice of intention to revoke the South East Plan, Eastleigh Borough Council has taken the decision not to proceed with planning for this SDA. As only a minor part, if any, of the SDA was likely to be within Winchester District it is not appropriate for the Winchester part of this to be planned for in isolation. Therefore neither the SDA nor any alternative provision is being carried forward in the Winchester Core Strategy.

We are aware that PUSH has reviewed and revised its housing target and is planning work to apportion this to districts. Given the work to date and testing of options we consider the substantial provision being proposed within Winchester District in the South Hampshire Urban Area and part of the Market Towns and Rural Area to be adequate to meet the local needs of the area and support the economic growth strategy of PUSH.



## **Market Towns and Rural Area**

This spatial area includes the 50 or so smaller settlements within the District, which range from larger villages of a few thousand population, to small hamlets of a few dwellings originally serving the agricultural industry. Updated population and household projections for this broad area suggest the need to plan for about an additional 1,500 new homes over the Plan period.

There is much advice on how to deal with development in rural areas, all with the principle of creating and maintaining sustainable communities. The guidance emphasises that in rural areas most new development should be focused in or near local service centres, with some limited development in other smaller rural settlements to meet local business and community needs and to maintain the vitality of these communities. Significant development should not be directed to settlements which are remote from, or with poor public transport links to, service centres. This philosophy lies at the heart of our settlement strategy expressed in the Core Strategy Preferred Option, which included the following vision:

**The vision for the market towns and rural area is to provide for development that serves local needs in the most accessible and sustainable locations to maintain the vitality and viability of existing communities.**

Whilst this vision still remains relevant we suggest it is updated to reflect some of the key issues arising from Blueprint (see below).

The settlement strategy covering all the smaller towns and villages across the District and within the Market Towns and Rural Area designation, was devised and included as a draft policy in the Core Strategy Preferred Option, to direct development to the most sustainable locations. The strategy was based on an assessment of a package of measures including population, access to public transport, catchment areas and service provision (shopping facilities, health, education, community uses and employment opportunities).

The strategy made a distinction between the larger market towns and smaller rural hamlets, by allocating each settlement to one of four levels. Each Level was accompanied by its own development strategy, indicating the appropriate amount of development that should be planned for, to deliver the above vision and how it was envisaged this could be achieved.

This approach received much support but there was some debate around the corresponding levels of development, particularly references to the number of new dwellings and other forms of development that may be promoted.

During 2009, the results of a study undertaken by the Government under the guidance of Matthew Taylor MP referred to as “Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing”, was published. This report made a number of recommendations to the Government as how to nurture a healthy rural economy and to ensure a

## Plans for Places

supply of affordable housing. As a result the Government made available funds via the Department for Communities and Local Government plus the Homes and Community Agency, for Local Authorities to bid for assistance from CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) under a project entitled Rural Masterplanning. Winchester City Council and East Hampshire District Council submitted a joint bid for assistance, to determine if their emerging Core Strategies' approach for rural settlements was robust and 'future proofed'. This bid was successful and received consultancy support via CABE, until end March 2011.

The Rural Masterplanning work was an opportunity to not only 'test' the approach used to date, but to also maximise the use of other 'experts' on any innovative or emerging approaches to this issue. The project resulted in an assessment of the methodology used to create the settlement strategy, in addition to the identification of other tools that could be adapted and applied to the local circumstances of Winchester District. These new tools suggested considering how well connected a settlement might be in relation to accessing goods and services, in addition to understanding local views and how residents saw their communities changing in the future. This clearly links very well with the many well-structured Blueprint comments.

The Council holds reasonable data on the population and service provision of settlements, but needed further information on how settlements relate to each other and if there were natural groupings in terms of smaller settlements having a stronger functional relationship with one or more of the larger settlements. The Council therefore asked each Parish Council to provide data on the nearest available source of certain services, such as where is the nearest primary school; cash point; petrol filling station, shop providing for weekly provisions, etc.

This data has been used in a number of ways. Firstly in combination with public transport information to determine a how well-connected a settlement is. Secondly, to illustrate the spatial relationships between the smaller/larger settlements and to clarify how settlements function regardless of their physical characteristics.

Responses to Blueprint were received from a large number of settlements within the Market Towns and Rural Area. Many of these were specific to the town/village concerned, but there were many common issues raised across this spatial area:-

Topic	Common issues raised
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognise need for development to retain/support local economy</li><li>• Acknowledge sustainable locations should accommodate a corresponding level of growth</li><li>• Need 2/3 bed dwellings – for older people; families and young people</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need low cost rented/affordable accommodation</li> <li>• Sheltered housing / specialist care home for elderly</li> <li>• Recognition of the need to promote local identity and rural character</li> <li>• New homes to be energy efficient</li> </ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faster broadband is essential for rural businesses</li> <li>• Welcome tourism and need to maximise gateway locations to South Downs National Park</li> <li>• Support for new small business units – starter/light industrial units</li> <li>• Recognise need to support and retain local shops and services which provide local jobs</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request improved car parking facilities</li> <li>• Greater range of leisure facilities</li> <li>• Need to address climate change and promotion of low carbon economy</li> <li>• Retain/improve existing services schools, medical etc.</li> <li>• Concern about impact on infrastructure if more development occurs</li> </ul>

Fundamentally the need for a level of growth appropriate to a particular settlement is recognised, whether for residential or business purposes. What is appropriate should be determined within the context of meeting specific needs, such as for the elderly or local families, whilst protecting rural character and settlement identity. The need for business growth is also widely recognised but often couched in terms of small-scale schemes. Accordingly, we propose the following updated vision for the Market Towns and Rural Area:

**The vision for the market towns and rural area is to support development that serves local needs in the most accessible and sustainable locations, promotes the vitality and viability of communities, and maintains their rural character and individual settlement identity.**

The key for Plans for Places is to achieve this vision by balancing the aspirations expressed through Blueprint with the updated statistics and analysis of the data referred to previously. It is important to consider a package of measures, not just individual elements of data or opinion.

### New Alresford and Bishops Waltham

We have always considered that these are the two main settlements in the Market Towns and Rural Area and have higher levels of population, service

## Plans for Places

provision, connections and relationships with surrounding places. They also generate many of the development needs identified and the potential opportunities for these to be delivered through a range of sites and redevelopment opportunities. The responses from the relevant Town/Parish Councils made various suggestions to maintain and improve the role of these settlements as the key service centres within the Market Towns and Rural Area.

Blueprint responses for Bishops Waltham and New Alresford accept the need to change and to respond to local housing, employment and community needs. In our discussions following on from Blueprint representatives of both communities have indicated that they feel they could each accommodate an average of around 20-25 dwellings per annum (400- 500 new homes over 20 years). This would be through a mixture of redevelopment opportunities in the short to medium term within the existing built-up area and planned greenfield releases in the longer term, where necessary to meet particular needs and wider community aspirations.

Both wish to address a range of housing needs including the desire to provide affordable family accommodation and suitable housing options for their older residents. They recognise the need to address the changing requirements of businesses and suggest various ways to achieve this. Both Bishops Waltham and New Alresford are situated in gateway locations to the South Downs National Park and are keen to exploit the tourism and other benefits that this unique opportunity may provide. They also acknowledge that they act as service centres for a wider rural population often providing a number of key services such as medical provision; small supermarkets; libraries and education.

Profiles for both settlements have been produced in consultation with the Town/Parish Councils (see Appendix A). These set out the key characteristics, opportunities and threats, which have been compiled from a number of sources, primarily responses to Blueprint and local aspirations expressed in community plans such as Market Town Health Checks, Town/Parish Plans, etc.

We agree that, whilst these settlements will experience changes over the life of the Core Strategy, given their existing credentials they can be expected to remain as sustainable communities serving a broader area. It is therefore proposed that these two settlements should accommodate around 400-500 dwellings each over the Plan period, a good proportion of the 1500 new homes required in the Market Towns and Rural Area. The development strategy for these areas should also provide for supporting economic growth and community provision, to reflect their role as key service centres within the rural part of the District.

The Core Strategy will only include 'strategic' site allocations and it is not proposed that any of the potential greenfield releases in these settlements will be of this scale. The Core Strategy will not, therefore, contain small-scale site allocations or other detailed local policies which might deal with all of the issues raised in the settlement profiles or through Blueprint. It is, however,

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intended to set out the broad development strategy within which many of the local aspirations can be addressed, for example:

- maintaining and strengthening the shopping, service, tourism and employment role of these settlements;
- ensuring that greenfield releases are aimed mainly at supporting this role or meeting other local needs;
- protecting the adjoining National Park and other important aspects of the environment and setting of the settlements, or gaps between settlements;
- creating development opportunities by relocating/redeveloping certain uses or areas, provided important uses and facilities are re-provided in locations that will continue to serve the settlements;
- maintaining and where possible improving public transport provision;
- provision of adequate and timely infrastructure in conjunction with development and to address existing deficiencies.

### Colden Common, Denmead, Kings Worthy, Swanmore, Waltham Chase, and Wickham

These are settlements where Blueprint responses indicate that, although they have quite different characteristics, they all perform a role as locally-important service centres. The Blueprint responses show a desire to maintain and improve local facilities and public transport in these settlements, often with suggestions for new facilities or services, along with some localised concerns about the capacity of particular facilities or infrastructure. They also value local services as employment providers and support appropriate development for small businesses and improved Broadband, whilst being concerned about the impact of large vehicles on rural roads.

These smaller service centres acknowledge the need to provide for local housing needs, especially for affordable housing and older persons' housing. At the same time they are nervous about the threats they perceive to their particular settlement character and, like many rural settlements, these villages have a strong local community spirit.

These responses indicate that these settlements are sustainable and wish to address a number of local issues such as an ageing population and the need for limited growth for economic purposes, but within the confines of protecting their individual character and identity. Common feedback from these settlements is that the local gaps that protect them from coalescence with surrounding built development must be retained.

We agree that the strategy for Colden Common, Denmead, Kings Worthy, Swanmore, Waltham Chase, and Wickham should recognise their sustainability and enable the needs identified to be met, whilst not promoting development which would threaten their individual identity, including the gaps with adjoining settlements or other important features. Some of these settlements may have more 'brownfield' options for development than others, and some abut the National Park or have defined local gaps. Given this variety of circumstances, we suggest that these settlements provide a total of 900-1,500 dwellings over 20 years. This would be through redevelopment

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and small scale greenfield releases to address primarily local housing and employment needs, but which may also offer wider community benefits.

Profiles for all of these settlements have been produced in consultation with the relevant Parish Councils (see Appendix A). These set out the key characteristics, opportunities and threats, which have been compiled from a number of sources, primarily responses to Blueprint and local aspirations expressed in community plans such as Parish Plans. The number of dwellings that should be provided in each of these settlements should be within the range 150 – 250, with the exact level guided by the characteristics and opportunities listed in the profiles.

Any small-scale site allocations or other detailed local policies, which might be needed to deal with some of the issues raised in the settlement profiles, will be made through the Development Management and Allocations DPD. The Core Strategy will, however, set out the broad development strategy within which many of the local aspirations can be addressed, for example:

- emphasising the need to maintain and improve local facilities and public transport provision;
- enabling small-scale business developments, particularly for local start-up businesses;
- promoting development suited to local housing needs, particularly for affordable housing or housing for older people;
- conserving local features which are important in giving the settlements their character, particularly those identified in Village Design Statements or the District Landscape Character Assessment.
- protecting the adjoining National Park and identified gaps between settlements;

### Other Settlements in the Market Towns and Rural Area

The remainder of the settlements in the Market Towns and Rural Area are very varied in terms of their size, character, level of service provision, etc. Some have large populations but a poor level of service provision whilst others may have unusually good service provision for their size, often reflecting their historic importance. Many others are very modest both in terms of both their population and the level of service provision. This is typical of a diverse rural area where there is a high degree of personal mobility and choice, which creates a complex pattern of settlement dependencies.

Although many of these settlements may be very small and do not necessarily perform well on traditional 'sustainability' criteria, almost all acknowledged through Blueprint the need for some housing, often smaller affordable units or housing for older people. Most did not identify a need for larger dwellings and several mentioned live-work units. These settlements are particularly concerned about the impact of development on the character of their village and would want development to contribute positively to their village, or to be on brownfield sites.

## Plans for Places

Blueprint responses were supportive of small-scale business development and the need to improve Broadband, although concerned about traffic on rural roads. The importance of local services, where they exist, was recognised along with concern about possible overloading of facilities and infrastructure by new development. Some villages have aspirations to improve facilities or provide new ones.

We believe that the approach for this group of settlements should be aimed at delivering the modest levels and types of development which they want, and which will also help to maintain their local population and services, whilst respecting their concerns about its impact. The diversity of settlements in this group means that some settlements have more to offer than others, and the approach should reflect this. They may range from villages which either perform a small-scale service centre role or have a reasonable size of resident population, to small hamlets which a very small population and service base.

In villages which currently provide reasonable local facilities, such as schools or a local shop/Post Office, or which have a population that could support these facilities, we feel that the emphasis should be to retain and improve their role as local service centres. In these villages a modest level of development should be allowed which may help, for example, to retain the local school or Post Office, provide sheltered accommodation, or encourage more small businesses and opportunities for young people.

Some comments in response to Blueprint and previous consultations expressed concern that a strategy based on service provision or population size may only be relevant at the point of publication and that some services may change at short notice e.g. the closure of village pubs and shops or declining public transport provision. We accept that, as the Core Strategy is expected to have a life span of 20 years, a more realistic approach is to devise a set of criteria to use to judge planning proposals at the time that a planning application is made.

We suggest that all of the settlements in this group would be subject to a criteria-based policy which would allow for small-scale development appropriate to each settlement. It is not intended to quantify the amount of new development involved, as this will be locally-determined having regard to the needs of the local residents, businesses and services and in accordance with the criteria. Under such a criteria-based approach there would be no need to retain the village boundaries which the current Local Plan Review applies to some of these settlements and which some view as a constraint.

Some of these settlements will now lie within the South Downs National Park, which has statutory purposes to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public. It is also a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park. It will be necessary for development in these settlements to respect this designation, which may result in a more restrictive approach to development.

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The policy will need to set out appropriate guidance for applicants and indicate that development will necessarily be of a limited scale, given the modest size and sustainability credentials of the settlements involved. But the criteria should also have the flexibility to allow local communities to determine through their Neighbourhood or Parish Plans whether additional development is needed to improve the sustainability of a settlement, respond to local needs, or to deliver local community aspirations. We suggest the matters to be covered by the criteria should include:-

- Identifying the settlements that the policy applies to (either a list or a definition);
- Type and general level of development in relation to the size/form of the settlement;
- Defining acceptable locations for development (not necessarily site-specific) to contain settlements within recognised limits and prevent damage to their settings;
- Limitations on the scale of development to address local concerns, unless the need for development has been identified through a Neighbourhood or Parish Plan and would benefit the local community;
- Consideration of the impact of proposals on the environment, infrastructure and setting of the settlement,
- Proposals within the South Downs National Park, or affecting other key national or local designations, should be consistent with its identified purposes.



### **The Topics...**

Having considered the spatial strategies for the places within the District, it is necessary to reflect on the broad topics that will generally apply across the District.

The emphasis of Blueprint was to allow local communities to debate their future needs, rather than to re-consider the range of policies currently expressed in the Core Strategy Preferred Option. However, since publication of the Core Strategy Preferred Option in May 2009, there have been a number of changes to legislation and some of the evidence base has been or is in the process of being updated. This will necessitate a revision to a number of the Preferred Option policies that fall within the Core Policies section of the Core Strategy.

Given that the Councils Sustainable Community Strategy has been updated and simplified to reflect three key themes, this section of the Core Strategy will also need to be amended to reflect the new themes. Also, following advice from the Planning Inspectorate and consideration of comments on the Preferred Option it is the intention to incorporate some of the topic policies into the spatial strategies for the various parts of the District.

The overall effect of these changes will be to make the topic sections of the Core Strategy more concise and the following briefly lists those topic policies that will be retained in the Core Strategy. The detailed expression of these policies will be updated to reflect comments received to the Preferred Option; discussions with the statutory agencies and service providers; changes to legislation; updates to the evidence base and comments emerging from Blueprint, where relevant.

### **Active Communities**

This section will cover the following

- open space, sport and recreation
- transport
- affordable housing -
- housing mix
- gypsies and travellers – there will be a need to undertake an assessment of the local needs for gypsies and travellers so that the Core Strategy can include an up to date policy, in accordance with recent Government advice.
- retention of local services and facilities

## Plans for Places

### Prosperous Economy

All policies within this section have now been incorporated into the spatial strategies for the Places.

### High Quality Environment

This section to cover the following

- Green infrastructure/Biodiversity/Flooding, flood risk and the water environment
- Cultural heritage and landscape character
- Settlement gaps
- High quality sustainable design/Effective use of land
- Sustainable low and zero carbon built development/Renewable and decentralised energy
- South Downs National Park (any locally-specific strategic policies not referred to within the spatial strategies).

**Infrastructure and Delivery Plan**

The Core Strategy is required to be supported by evidence of how the strategies and policies will be implemented. This section will therefore include the necessary updated details. The Council is intending to produce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule although work on this has yet to commence. An Infrastructure Study was published for consultation in late 2010 and finalised in 2011, which will form the basis for progressing CIL.

Plans for Places

### **Next Steps**

Plans for Places is published for a six week consultation period. Comments will then inform the next formal stage of the Core Strategy to be published under Regulation 27 later this year.

Plans for Places can be viewed and/or downloaded via the following link:-

**Add link**

Comments must be made by 5pm on **Friday XXXX** and returned to

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