

CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE

28 November 2011

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Beckett (Chairman) (P)

Godfrey (P)

Weston (P)

Humby (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Jeffs (P)

Learney (P)

Evans (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Collin, Hiscock, Hutchison and Sanders

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Mitchell

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held 10 November 2011 be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLICATION OF WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - PART 1
JOINT CORE STRATEGY**

(Report CAB2258 (LDF) refers)

Councillor Godfrey declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in matters relating to Hampshire County Council, as he was a County employee.

Councillor Beckett declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in all matters relating to local gaps.

Mrs. A Bartaby, Mrs. G Busher, Mr. H. Cole, Mrs. C. Holloway,, Mr. P Davies, Mr. C Gillham, and Councillors Collin, Hiscock, Hutchison and Sanders spoke on this item during public participation and their comments are summarised under each section below.

Mrs C Dibden and Mr M Emmett had to leave before they had an opportunity to speak and their comments were either submitted as a note or relayed by officers.

The Committee noted that there were a number of changes to the text of the Joint Core Strategy, which had been put forward as corrections, updates and to clarify the intention and interpretation of the text and policy. These were included within a schedule, circulated at the meeting. These changes, together with those arising at the Committee meeting, would be consolidated into a revised, updated, version of the Joint Core Strategy to be submitted to Cabinet and Council.

Core Strategy introduction - process and procedures

Councillor Hutchison stated that following the work of the Winchester Town Forum to produce the Vision for Winchester, and the work on “Blue Sky Thinking” by local architect Paul Bulkeley, a framework and action plan was now required so that changes could be brought about to realise the opportunities. This would bring about a more holistic, integrated and design based approach, which would deal with matters beyond housing and employment to improve the built environment. This considered approach towards a high quality environment could include areas already suggested for improvement, such as those surrounding the railway station.

Councillor Hutchison continued that the policy on transport could also be strengthened to take into account walking and cycling, road safety, safety of pedestrians and cyclists and improvements to the cycling network. In addition, policy CP12 on renewable energy should be updated to reflect the latest evidence base, where renewable energy had become an integral part of the economy and also provided opportunities for economic development.

The Committee agreed that the matters raised by Councillor Hutchison be given consideration by the officers for further debate about their inclusion at Council.

District Housing Requirement

The Head of Strategic Planning gave a presentation to the Committee on the background to the Local Plan process (a copy of the presentation is available to view on the City Council’s website under the Cabinet (Local Development Framework) Committee’s agendas, minutes and reports).

In reply to a Member’s question, the Head of Strategic Planning stated that the principal risks arising by not having an up to date adopted Local Plan were the presumption in favour of residential development, as a result of the District not having a five year land supply, and of the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the draft National Planning Policy Framework which may arise from not having an up to date plan. By advancing towards the adoption of a Local Plan, which could be submitted for examination before a Planning Inspector, the Council could demonstrate that it was working to address these issues.

Mr H. Cole questioned the basis for additional housing when the effects of the current recession were taken into consideration. The draft Local Plan had assumed a rise in employment in the Winchester District of 11 % but this could now be downgraded to just under 7%. This would have implications for the ability of the local population to form new households and would inevitably reduce the number of jobs on offer to inward migrants. The projections for economic growth were now over-optimistic, particularly when an estimated 15% reduction in household incomes over the 15 year period of the Plan from 2015 was taken into consideration.

Mr Gillham (representing Friends of the Earth) commented on the effectiveness of the consultation process, which he stated had not allowed local people to take a role in determination. He also added that the basis of the projections was out of date, being based on pre-2008 figures, which had been founded on debt. The demand for housing was from those outside of the District, being driven by inward migration and market development. Local needs housing could be met from the development of council housing on brownfield sites.

Mrs G Busher sought reassurance that the correct figure for housing in larger Market Towns was 500 and not 3000 as had been mentioned in previous reports. She added that the Strategic Development Areas at Fareham and the North of Whiteley development would affect the infrastructure of Bishops Waltham, particularly in respect of its road network. The inclusion of the provision for sports facilities was welcomed, as they was a deficiency in supply in the area and developer contributions should be used for their provision.

The Chairman confirmed that the correct figure as mentioned above by Mrs Busher was 500.

Councillor Hiscock spoke of the need for a proper planned framework for the provision for primary education. For example, if Barton Farm was developed with 2,000 homes, then there was provision in the Master Plan for a new two-three form entry primary school. However, this was not the case for small scale, incremental, development, which could result in Winchester children being bussed by Hampshire County Council to surrounding schools where capacity existed.

Councillor Collin drew attention to the effect of the recession in decreasing economic growth, which invalidated the more optimistic growth assumptions within the Local Plan. A new interpretation of the evidence in the Housing Technical Paper was required to justify the 11,000 additional dwellings over the plan period, 4,000 of which would be in Winchester town. In respect of affordable housing (policies CP3-4), more affordable housing was required, but this provision was tied in most cases to being a percentage of private housing supply. It would be of great benefit if two to three hundred affordable homes of a mixed tenure could be supplied without the penalty of building new private homes.

Councillor Sanders also questioned the accuracy of the housing numbers within the Housing Technical Paper, when the downward pressure on growth was taken into consideration and also the method of allocating housing numbers across the District. The concerns raised at the Winchester Town Forum about the DTZ Planning Consultant's study on this topic had not been addressed.

In reply, the Corporate Director (Operations) stated that although the DTZ study had recognised short term downward pressures on growth, over the medium to longer term there were also growth pressures and it had been concluded that the figure of 11,000 new homes was appropriate. The conclusion of the Blueprint exercise had been inconclusive on the numbers of homes that were required for Winchester town. The allocation of 4000 homes had been based on a percentage allocation, which had been qualified, and also reflected the conclusions of the Blueprint exercise. To build 3000 homes within the existing built-up area could potentially be achieved, but it would be at such a high density as to have a more detrimental impact.

The Head of Strategic Planning proceeded to give a detailed presentation of the methodology used to address issues such as localism and the derivation of the housing figures following Blueprint. The methodology was also set out in the Housing Technical Paper and included taking into consideration factors such as migration, changes in household size and planning to meet affordable housing needs. In respect of the housing figures, independent conclusions by the Planning Inspector and Planning Agents as evidenced at the Barton Farm appeal (556 dwellings per annum) and the Pitt Manor appeal (560 dwellings per annum) had both calculated projected housing figures which were very close to the City Council's calculation of a requirement of 550 dwellings per annum.

He continued that with regard to housing distribution, the proposed housing figures for West of Waterlooville and North of Whiteley were justified and in line with PUSH requirements. The figures for Winchester town were proportional, but were reasonable given the balance that needed to be struck between its sustainability credentials and its constraints and distinctions. The balance of the 11,000 allocation would be in the market towns, which in some cases would lead to a local choice to have more homes than required through allocation in order to retain the towns' service role. Any alternative lower overall housing figure would need to be justified and be sound when balancing capacity with housing need.

In further addressing the points raised by public speakers, the Head of Strategic Planning stated that the lowering of the projected growth in economic activity and the resulting effects on households had been reflected in the housing figures. This particularly affected the economic-based housing scenario (which had now reduced and was very close to the 550pa figure), but the DTZ report had also examined in detail the implications for the assumptions behind the Office of National Statistics (ONS)-led projections. The requirements for local consultation had been met by holding public meetings and inviting public representation. The Corporate Director (Operations) added that to meet affordable housing needs the availability of finance was an important factor, as well as land supply, and the success of

providing affordable housing was linked to access to private finance. In addition, the latest figures from the ONS had confirmed that net international migration was still increasing.

In answer to a Member's question, the officers also clarified that back garden development (policy DS1) no longer fell within the PPS3 definition of 'previously developed land'. Potential sites would be tested on their merits, with the Development Allocations DPD or Neighbourhood Plans giving sites further consideration rather than making provision in this strategic-level document.

The officers also clarified questions regarding the phasing of development, particularly if the majority of development took place in the early years of the Plan period. It was noted that the West of Waterlooville development had already commenced and that the peak of development, which included North of Whiteley and Barton Farm, would be in the middle or second half of the Plan period and that market delivery would be likely to regulate the pace of development, but the situation could be reviewed if it appeared that the majority of development was taking place too early.

Officers had based policy CP3 - Affordable Housing Provision on Market Led Housing Sites - on an up-to-date assessment of viability, which would be discussed with development interests and amendments brought to Cabinet if necessary. This had tested whether the requirement to provide 40 % of the gross number of dwellings as affordable housing was economically viable or a disincentive to build small housing numbers. Policy CP3 considered viability and achievability and also included the flexibility to allow negotiations to take place, but it still needed to establish a strong policy requirement.

It was also suggested that the terminology relating to exception sites should remain consistent (page 67 second bullet point) and officers agreed to consider this further, as there may be justification for different wording given that it related to exception sites.

The Corporate Director (Operations) informed the meeting that Mr M Emett representing Cala Homes had sought clarification on the second bullet point on page 32 of the report (relating to Barton Farm) regarding: "the organic sequence of development commencing at the southern urban edge of the site with the timely provision of infrastructure and community facilities to the benefit of the new community at the earliest possible time". The Corporate Director added that the point of concern related to infrastructure provision not keeping pace to this radiation of organic development from the southern urban edge. This was principally a practical point, but it did have some financial aspects and the points raised would be addressed by the Master Plan.

During debate, the view was put forward by some Members that the assumptions on households (and, for example, that those over the age of 45 were less likely to move out of their properties) and those on employment projections were incorrect and that the 'zero net migration' figures should be reconsidered. The Committee agreed that without an alternative proposal to consider, a conclusion was still required to be reached, and it was agreed

therefore that the recommendations should go forward to Cabinet and Council.

Strategy and Policies for Winchester Town

Mrs A Bartaby, speaking on behalf of the Church Commissioners, stated that the inclusion of the Bushfield Camp as an opportunity site was welcomed. It was acknowledged that, as stated by the Academy of Urbanism, this was a sensitive site of strategic importance and needed careful design and planting, as well as a high quality development to make it acceptable. Its inclusion within the Local Plan demonstrated positive planning and provided the opportunity for control, for example over the proportions of public open space and developable area.

Mr P Davies, on behalf of the City of Winchester Trust, stated that in respect of policy WT3 Bushfield Camp opportunity site, for a firm policy to be included within the Local Plan it should be clear that the site could be developed. However, the Vail Williams study in August 2010 had shown that Bushfield Camp was not developable as a Knowledge Park on economic grounds. Its inclusion as an opportunity site would fail a test of soundness before a Planning Inspector, as its inclusion was unreasonable and could not be justified. To develop the site would affect the visual setting of St Cross against its backdrop and its inclusion should therefore be deleted from the Local Plan.

Mr Davies continued that the City of Winchester Trust had always objected to the Barton Farm development and the loss of the green wedge. However, if Barton Farm was included within the Local Plan, then the density and design of development could be changed to reduce the area of land to be developed. If a density of 50 dwellings per hectare took place, as was approximately the density of development in the Hyde area of Winchester town, then only a fraction of the land would be taken, and the northern boundary of development could be south of the existing tree line. The inclusion of a tree belt along Andover Road and the provision of a tunnel under the railway line (to allow development on both sides of the railway line) could result in 9 hectares of the northern part of the site being available for the provision of a school and open space. The provision of 2,000 homes on a smaller site would meet the needs of the site and its allocation.

In response, the officers stated that in respect of Barton Farm, the proposal of the City of Winchester Trust could be given further examination in discussions with Cala Homes over its Master Plan for the site. A number of matters would need to be clarified as to whether they would be deliverable or affordable, for example the provision of a tunnel under the railway line. To not develop part of the site could also lead to further pressure for its development in the future. In respect of Bushfield Camp, the site was not being claimed to be deliverable for a knowledge park at present, but there were examples of other Local Plans/Core Strategies where such sites had been included in order that criteria and conditions to ensure successful delivery could be set out.

Mrs C Holloway then spoke on behalf of WinACC. Reference was made to the Barton Farm development (WT2) and the accessibility of the development to the town centre and also measures to mitigate the impact on the road network, including the definition of "overloaded". It was also asked whether in respect of WT1, there could be a distinction between transport and other carbon emissions when considering air quality.

The officers responded that such matters were already detailed and it would be for the local planning authority, following advice from traffic engineers, to assess a scheme's acceptability. The wording of WT1 would be cross referenced to make a clearer distinction regarding emissions.

Mr H Cole spoke in respect of policy WT1 - Development Strategy for Winchester Town. Mention was made to paragraph 2.7 on page 12 of the Local Plan and the references to retail floorspace. It was stated that, due to the effects of the recession on expenditure per head of population, then the requirements for comparison retail floor space (which were based on pre-recession data and had estimated that spending by Winchester's catchment area population would increase by 66 % per head between 2011 and 2026), had been overtaken by a key events and should be revised or deleted from the policy. In addition, the provision for additional convenience floorspace mentioned in paragraph 2.7 had already been provided by permissions for supermarkets at Andover Road in Winchester and in Bishops Waltham.

The officers responded that the retail study had been refreshed in 2010 to take account of the recession and officers had questioned the consultants on the increase in floorspace suggested, but the consultants considered their conclusions were justified. The inclusion of retail growth would help support communities and had a low risk as it was not included as a policy requirement and did not include suggestions for large scale retail development.

In answer to Members' questions, the officers explained that there were no major deficiencies within Cala Homes' Master Plan for the development of Barton Farm and that it would be difficult to justify the production of a revised Master Plan, particularly as public consultation had been completed. To address the issue of organic phased development, it was agreed that the Master Plan should also include a phasing plan and that this requirement be included in policy WT2.

The officers also explained that a change was proposed to exclude reference to student accommodation from policy WT1, as its provision did not count towards housing numbers and that its inclusion was more relevant under policy CP2 on housing provision and mix.

In addition, the employment figures referred to in paragraph 3.14 would be checked through and updated if required. However, the predictions of an increase in employment did seem to be borne out by the figures quoted by a Member, as the employment of 66,300 as calculated by DTZ in 2007 had increased to 69,000 in the latest 2010 figures. An update of the employment figures would only affect the scenario of housing numbers based on projected employment figures and this was not the scenario being advocated.

The officers also explained that the Winchester Town Forum had made positive suggestions, and those mentioned by Councillor Hutchison during his representation could be accommodated within the Local Plan following their development into a proper form. A neighbourhood plan could not go beyond the provisions of the Local Plan but the work on the Vision for Winchester could take a significant step into the future.

The points made by Councillor Hiscock regarding primary education provision would be for discussion with the infrastructure providers and particularly Hampshire County Council, who had not indicated that they required a new education site. There was provision for some educational facilities within the Barton Farm development and developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy could be available for further provision. Provision could not be made for a new primary educational facility if it had not been requested by Hampshire County Council. Discussions would continue with the County and paragraph 3.29 would be amended to make the wording more positive about additional primary school provision.

In respect of policy WT3 relating to Bushfield Camp, it was agreed that the criteria should make it clear that development could potentially be on land other than the previously occupied site, provided the 20 hectares limit was maintained.

During debate, Members commented that should the Barton Farm development proceed, the principles of development could be revisited in negotiation with the applicant, for example to determine the location of the green infrastructure and integration with a park and ride scheme.

Strategies and Policies for South Hampshire Urban Area

The Corporate Director (Operations) read to the Committee to a note from Mrs C Dibden requesting that the buffer for the Fareham Strategic Development Area (around 7000 homes) should be included within the Fareham Borough Council area and not within the Winchester District to the south of Wickham. Fareham Borough Council should be made aware of its responsibility to this effect.

The Corporate Director (Operations) also explained that the number of homes proposed for the North of Whiteley was described as 'about 3,000', which would allow for a scheme within the range of, for example, 2,900 to 3,100. The provision would require a three form primary school and be a trigger for the provision of Whiteley Way, as well as other infrastructure.

It was agreed that in respect of infrastructure provision, including education, in the North of Whiteley development, a phasing plan also be included.

The officers also clarified that in respect of the North of Fareham Strategic Development Area, some green infrastructure and gap areas would be included within the Fareham Borough Council area, as this was a requirement within their Core Strategy. Representation could also be made that the green infrastructure be located to the north of the strategic development area,

adjacent to the Winchester City Council boundary, in order to widen the strategic gap.

The officers were also requested to strengthen the wording of paragraph 3.59 to clarify that references to undeveloped land did not include buildings, in order that the green buffers would be maintained.

Strategy and Policies for Market Towns and Rural Areas

The Committee agreed that, prior to Cabinet, the wording of policy MTRA 3 - Other Settlements in the Market Towns and Rural Area - be rephrased to make it clearer that development over and above the provision proposed would need to meet local needs.

Members also stated that there was concern over the phasing of development given the targets that had been set for the larger settlements. Officers responded that this would involve too much detail for this strategic part of the Local Plan, but could be better controlled through a Neighbourhood Plan or a site allocations document. Localism would allow development where there was clear local support that could be demonstrated and it was in accordance with the Local Plan.

The Committee also debated the issues facing settlements where brownfield development sites were not released by landowners, placing pressure on greenfield sites to be developed first. The officers replied that the clear presumption of the policies was that development would be within the settlement boundary in the first instance and allowance could be made for available brownfield sites before a greenfield requirement was set. It was a reasonable expectation that brownfield sites would be made available and no reason why many should not be developed in the first instance.

At the request of Members, it was agreed that paragraph 3.93 include reference to Worthy Down (defence establishment) and that in MTRA 4 the wording be reviewed to take into account traffic generation and the difficulties caused by a large vehicles accessing reused existing buildings in rural areas.

Core Policies - Active Communities

The Head of Strategic Planning reported that in respect of policy CP 5 - sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, meetings would take place with neighbouring authorities to progress this matter and that most policies were governed at a national level rather than through a local plan.

The Committee agreed that on page 69, within the last bullet point, the words "associated with each pitch" be deleted.

Core Policies - Prosperous Economy

These policies were supported.

Core Policies - High Quality Environment

Mrs C Holloway spoke on behalf of WinACC. In respect of policy CP10 – Transport, it was requested that more emphasis be given to reducing the need for travel by car and that, under policy CP11 - Sustainable Low and Zero Carbon Built Environment, the inclusion of level 5 for the energy aspect of the Code for Sustainable Homes was welcomed. It was also requested that on page 81, consideration be given to encourage the use of energy generated by local renewable energy providers rather than obtaining supplies from large national renewables suppliers.

The Committee supported the encouragement of the use of renewable energy from local renewable energy providers, but asked the officers to establish whether this was permissible given the definition of ‘Allowable Solutions’.

The Committee also agreed that in respect of policy CP12 - Renewable and Decentralised Energy, to include a bullet point to make reference to the impact and affect on local people in neighbourhoods where such schemes were proposed.

Policy CP21 - Infrastructure and Community Benefit

This policy was supported.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Council:

1. THAT THE WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PART 1 – JOINT CORE STRATEGY BE APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION (PRE-SUBMISSION) AND SUBSEQUENT SUBMISSION TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT STATUTORY AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.
2. THAT THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY BE REQUESTED TO APPROVE THE PLAN FOR PUBLICATION (PRE-SUBMISSION) AND SUBSEQUENT SUBMISSION TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE, IN SO FAR AS RELEVANT TO THE AUTHORITY AS LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY FOR THAT PART OF WINCHESTER DISTRICT LYING WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK.
3. THAT THE HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT, BE GIVEN DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO APPROVE ANY MINOR CHANGES REQUESTED BY THE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PRIOR TO PUBLICATION OF THE PLAN.

To Cabinet:

4. That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement, to add the appendices to the Local Plan and make minor amendments to the Plan and accompanying documents prior to publication, in order to correct errors and format text without altering the meaning of the Plan;

5. That the Head of Strategic Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement, be authorised to submit the Plan and accompanying documents to the Secretary of State following the publication period, in accordance with the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements;

6. That the Head of Strategic Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement, be authorised to make editorial amendments to the Local Plan and accompanying documents prior to submission to the Secretary of State, to correct errors and format text without altering the meaning of the Plan;

7. That the Head of Strategic Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement/Leader, be authorised to make suggested changes to the Plan before and during the public examination process.

8. That approval be given to appoint a Programme Officer and undertake other work as necessary to prepare for and undertake the public examination (including meeting the Planning Inspectorate's fees), provided this is within the allocated LDF budget/Reserve.

RESOLVED:

9. That the recommended responses to previously-omitted comments on *Plans for Places...after Blueprint* (set out at Appendix 1) be noted and taken into account in considering the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy.

10. That a revised version of the Joint Core Strategy, showing (with track changes) the corrections, updates and amendments now made, be submitted to the meetings of Cabinet (7 December 2011) and Council (8 December 2011).

The meeting commenced at 10.00am, adjourned at 1.15pm, recommenced at 1.45pm and concluded at 4.05pm.

Chairman