

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE**17 October 2005****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Bidgood (Chairman) (P)

Bennetts
 Davies (P)
 Hammerton (P)
 Hutton (P)
 Jeffs (P)

Pearce (P)
 Pearson (P)
 Read (P)
 Saunders (P)
 Sutton (P)

Others in attendance who Spoke:

Councillors Beveridge (Portfolio Holder for Planning)

Officers in attendance:

Mr S Opacic (Forward Planning Team Manager)
 Mrs M Kirby (Planning Officer)
 Mr G White (Planning Officer)
 Mr H Bone (Assistant City Secretary and Solicitor (Legal))

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Bennetts.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sutton be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the 2005/06 Municipal Year.

3. **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED:

That future meetings of the Committee be held at 9.30am on Thursday 27 October 2005 and 9.30am Tuesday 15 November 2005 at the Guildhall, Winchester.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Hayter (a representative of the Bishops Waltham Society) commented on a discrepancy between the number of objectors and the number of issues raised in the Inspector's report. In response, Mr Opacic explained that this appeared to stem from the fact that the Inspector had not considered representations that had supported the Plan nor those that were withdrawn. Officers had undertaken a check of the document when it was submitted in draft and had not identified any major omissions,

other than those already responded to in the Inspector's Supplementary Report. It was not possible to request that the Inspector reconsider his report now that the final Report had been received.

In response to comments raised by Mrs Slattery, Mr Opacic said he believed that, as a consequence of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) had become the strategic planning authority, replacing Hampshire County, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils. Therefore any decision to release strategic reserve sites, such as Winchester City (north), would be taken by SEERA upon the advice of the former Strategic Planning Authorities.

5. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW INSPECTOR'S REPORT**
LOCAL PLAN CHAPTERS 1-5
 (Report WDLP49 refers)

The report set out the procedure and timescale for considering the Inspector's Report and the publication of the Proposed Modifications to the Plan. Mr Opacic explained that over its next three meetings, this Committee would consider the Inspector's recommendations on the Revised Deposit Local Plan. It was anticipated that this Committee's recommendations would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 14 December 2005, and then by Council on 11 January 2006. A six week public consultation period would follow, after which any representations would be considered by this Committee before the Plan's possible final adoption by Council.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Beveridge (Portfolio Holder for Planning) agreed that the minutes and recommendations of the forthcoming meetings of this Committee should all be considered together at the 14 December 2005 meeting of Cabinet.

The Committee noted that under the relevant European Directive, Local Plans adopted before 21 July 2006 need not include a strategic environmental assessment. Due to the additional workload, cost and associated delay to the Plan's adoption this assessment would bring, Members agreed the importance of the target of getting the Plan adopted before this July 2006 deadline.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs Edwards (as a representative of the City of Winchester Trust) commented on the relatively small opportunity the proposed work programme gave for public consultation. In response, Mr Opacic explained that government advice was that public consultation should be "front-loaded" with key stakeholders prior to publication and that a period of 6 weeks' public consultation remained after publication.

Mr Opacic summarised that some of the principal changes recommended by the Inspector related to the deletion of Policy H3 (that referred to development frontages) and the recommendation of local reserve sites to be developed if local housing completion targets were not being met. In order to maintain a realistic prospect of achieving the July 2006 adoption deadline, detailed consideration of these recommendations and the drafting of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) would need to be undertaken by consultants and reported to a future meeting of either this Committee, Cabinet or Council depending on when the work was completed. However, Mr Opacic confirmed that although desirable, it was not a legal requirement to publish the SPDs at the same time as the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan itself.

Members raised concerns regarding criteria by which the Inspector had recommended some reserve sites over others, but noted that the Council would control the triggering mechanism through a SPD.

Following comments from County Councillor Porter, Mr Opacic confirmed that it was likely that Parish Councils would be consulted as stakeholders on the proposed Policy H3 and local reserve site SPDs. He also agreed to update this Committee regarding the dates of these Stakeholder meetings.

Mr Opacic explained that the Council had been successful in a bid for free consultancy work to review and strengthen Policy DP8 (which referred to renewable energy and fell within Chapter 3) but that this work was ongoing at the time of this meeting. The Policy would therefore be considered by a future meeting of this Committee.

In response to a Member's comment, Mr Opacic confirmed that Village Design Statements (VDSs) as SPDs had to conform to the Local Plan and that Parish Councils would be asked to review their VDSs after the adoption of the Local Plan Review. This was particularly relevant in light of the proposed deletion of Policy H3.

During Members' consideration of the Inspector's recommended changes to the Plan (Appendix 2 of the report), it was noted that the Inspector had generally recommended that cross references be deleted from the body of the policies, but could remain (and be updated) within the explanatory text. Following debate it was agreed that, where used (for example page 22, new paragraph 3.22), cross references should be checked for accuracy.

The Committee also noted the Inspector's comment that the high densities of development recommended by PPG3 were not achievable in all cases and that there was a need to protect the character of some areas.

Members particularly discussed the wording of MOD 4.26 (page 34 of the report) and noted that the Inspector had supported the policy, which sought to retain a mix of dwelling sizes and types in the countryside by restricting increases to existing small dwellings. Although some Members were concerned at the use of the word "affordable", the majority of the Committee agreed with the proposed wording in the report, which argued in essence that smaller properties were often more affordable (and cheaper) than larger properties.

Following debate, the Committee agreed to the Schedule of Proposed Modifications to the Plan (Chapters 1-5) as set out in Appendix 2 of the report subject to the following amendments:

- Page 22 MOD 3.3 Paragraph 3.22: Officers be authorised to check and amend the Policy number references.
- Page 28 MOD 4.1 onwards: All policies to be renamed as CE policies throughout the chapter.
- Page 30 MOD 4.13: Deletion of (i) before the text "no suitable alternative.."

RESOLVED:

1. That it recommended to the meeting of Cabinet to be held on 14 December 2005 and Council that the content and schedule attached at Appendix 2 of the report, setting out Proposed Modifications to Chapter 1-5 of



the Winchester District Local Plan review be approved for publication and six weeks public consultation.

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and concluded at 11.35am.

Chairman