

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE**15 November 2005**Attendance:

Councillors:

Bidgood (Chairman) (P)

Bennetts (P)
Davies (P)
Hammerton
Hutton (P)
Jefferies (P)Pearce (P)
Pearson (P)
Read (P)
Saunders (P)
Sutton (P)Deputy Members

Councillor Busher (Standing Deputy for Councillor Hammerton)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Evans, Coates and Stallard

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Allgood, Beveridge (Portfolio Holder for Planning) and Mitchell

Officers in attendance:Mr S Opacic (Forward Planning Team Manager)
Mrs M Kirby (Planning Officer)
Mr H Bone (Assistant City Secretary (Legal))480. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Hammerton.

481. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting approximately 20 members of the public and a number of them made comments during consideration of Report WDLP52, as set out below.

482. **MINUTES**

(Report WDLP53 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee, held on 27 October 2005, be approved and adopted.

483. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW INSPECTORS' REPORT:
LOCAL PLAN CHAPTER 6 AND OTHER OUTSTANDING MATTERS**
(Report WDLP52 refers)

Councillor Davies declared a personal (but not personal and prejudicial) interest in respect of this item as a prospective Governor of Lantern School, Winchester (which adjoined the land at Bereweke Way, considered at Appendix 1 Map 11 of the Report) and as a Member of the Council of the City of Winchester Trust which had commented on the Report. Councillor Davies spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Bennetts declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item as his wife had recently retired from Peter Symonds College, which adjoined the land at Bereweke Way, considered at Appendix 1 Map 11 of the Report. Councillor Bennetts spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Busher declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item she had a relative who attended Peter Symonds College, which adjoined the land at Bereweke Way, considered at Appendix 1 Map 11 of the Report. Councillor Busher spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Pearson declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item as he was a member of Swanmore Parish Council which had commented on the Report, although he had not participated in the Parish Council's discussion on the Report. Councillor Pearson spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Jeffs declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this item as he was a member of Alresford Town Council which had commented on the Report. Councillor Jeffs spoke and voted thereon.

Mr Opacic explained that the two major and unanticipated recommended changes from the Inspectors' Report on the Local Plan concerned Local Reserve Sites and the replacement of Policy H.3 which defined development frontages in a number of settlements. As a consequence of these recommendations from the Inspectors, Adams Hendry had been appointed as consultants to prepare the Council's recommended response.

Mr Wilson, as a representative of Adams Hendry, gave the Committee an oral presentation on his initial findings of these two major issues. He explained that both issues would be discussed at two stakeholders' meetings (one for development interests and one for Parish Councils) on 17 November 2005, as part of a 'frontloaded' consultation process. Members noted that there would be a further 6 weeks of formal public consultation following the Council's publication of the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan, which would be considered at full Council on 11 January 2006.

Mr Opacic clarified that any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) associated with the Plan and adopted by the Council, following a statutory period of consultation, would not be subject to a Planning Inspector's Inquiry.

Policy H3

Mr Wilson explained that the Inspectors had concluded that Policy H.3 of the Revised Deposit Local Plan was inconsistent in that it permitted frontage development in some settlements and not others and that the policy needed strengthening to further

protect areas of the countryside from inappropriate development. The Inspectors had therefore recommended the deletion of Policy H.3 and that it should be replaced by:

“Proposal H.3:

Outside the built-up areas of settlements listed in Proposal H.2, schemes for limited infill residential development will only be permitted where the proposal accords with other relevant policies of the Plan and satisfies all of the following criteria:

- (i) the site is well related to an existing village or settlement in that at least one side would adjoin an existing residential boundary;*
- (ii) the principle of development on the site and the scale and form of the proposal would not harm the rural character and appearance of the area and that of the existing village or settlement to which it relates;*
- (iii) the development would be consistent with the Council’s objectives for the promotion of a sustainable pattern of development of the area.”*

Mr Wilson stated that, prima facie, the above policy was acceptable but stressed the importance of the details within the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) that would accompany the policy which would seek to prevent inappropriate development. In researching this, Adams Hendry had compared the proposed policies with similar policies at other Local Authorities.

However, initial concerns were raised regarding the proposal that infill development need not necessarily be between two existing residential dwellings; furthermore, the definition of “limited...” development and that the development should be “well related to an existing village or settlement.” In respect to this last point, Mr Wilson suggested that a definition could potentially be borrowed from the Coast and Country Conservation Policy which operated in the 1970’s and 80’s. He also suggested that the SPD should possibly list all of the recognised settlements within the District to clearly define “existing village or settlement.”

With regard to the sustainability objective within (iii), Mr Wilson suggested that the SPD could either list all sustainable locations within the District (based on a regularly updated sustainability matrix which should include public transport) or that the applicant should be required to demonstrate that their site was in a sustainable location.

Mr Wilson stated that the effect of the proposed policy should be assessed as part of the annual Housing Monitoring Report but that in practice, the policy was likely to effective for a limited period before it was reviewed with the introduction of the Local Development Framework.

Members considered the policy’s effect on garden development away from street frontages and Mr Wilson commented that this could possibly be permitted if it accorded with all the criteria and in particular that it should not harm the character of the settlement. Members also noted a definition of the size of a development “gap” may be required and that this should probably be comparable to the size of adjoining plots.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Hayter commented on the proposed policy and recommended that the sustainability matrix should take account of a village or settlement's proximity to a larger, more sustainable settlement and the importance of some development "gaps" as informal recreation spaces.

During the public participation element of the meeting, Councillor Coates spoke as a Ward Member for Droxford, Soberton & Hambledon and suggested that the proposed changes to H3 policies presented the Council with an opportunity to revisit development boundaries with a view to providing more affordable housing in sustainable locations.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members noted that further details on the H.3 policy would be considered at its next meeting and that development would only be permitted if it met all of the criteria set out above.

Local Reserve Sites

Mr Wilson reported that the Inspectors had recommended four Local Reserve Sites as an insurance against a possible underperformance of housing completions numbers from urban capacity sites or from delays at the West of Waterlooville Major Development Area (MDA). The proposed Local Reserve Sites were at Pitt Manor, Winchester; Worthy Road/Francis Gardens, Winchester; Little Frenchies Field, Denmead and Spring Gardens, New Alresford. These sites had been selected from almost 200 omission sites considered during the Inquiry as the most sustainable and appropriate to provide a total of approximately 400 dwellings.

As with the H.3 proposal above, Mr Wilson underlined the importance of adopting robust SPDs to accompany the Plan. The SPDs would need to address how the sites might be released, which could be based on a triggering mechanism (similar to that used by the Strategic Planning Authorities) and from the "trajectory" of the Annual Monitoring Report. The SPD could also take account of the lead-in time for developments and could prioritise their release on the basis of shortfalls of housing completions within localities, affordable housing or on the basis of a site's sustainability. This could relate their release to the size of the shortfall in housing completions.

Until their release, Mr Wilson confirmed that the Local Reserve Sites would continue to be treated in policy terms as areas of countryside and he underlined that Adams Hendry had been appointed to look at the operation of the policy rather than on the merits of individual sites.

Mr Opacic advised Members to accept the Inspectors' proposed changes as to reject them could result in a probable further Inquiry in which it was likely that all of the 40 omission sites around 'Category A' settlements (and possibly omission sites in other locations) would have to be reconsidered. This could result in the same Reserve Sites being put forward, and would certainly result in a significant delay in the adoption of the Plan which, if adopted after July 2006, would require the Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the whole Plan. In recommending the change to Members, Mr Opacic underlined that these were reserve sites which could only be triggered by the City Council.

In response to comments, Mr Opacic confirmed that although the Inspectors had considered whether the projected completion rates were too optimistic, the principle of Local Reserve Sites had not been previously discussed by Members or at the Inquiry. The Inspector had also considered the probability of windfall sites (such as

the Police Headquarters, Romsey Road, Winchester) in recommending Local Reserve Sites.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Gardner (a planning consultant) advised that in the longer term, the proposed policies of the South Downs National Park were likely to severely restrict development in central Hampshire, whilst the development in the southern parts of the District were likely to be encouraged through the emerging South-East Plan. However, Mr Opacic clarified that these policies were likely to have more weight after the lifetime of the proposed Local Plan (which ran up to 2011).

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Cole spoke on this issue. During his presentation he commented on the need to ensure that any triggering mechanism should encompass a “compelling justification” and that the largest Local Reserve Site, at Pitt Manor, should take account of the effects of a possible nearby Park and Ride site. Mr Cole also suggested that a shortage in the provision of affordable housing should not in itself trigger the release of sites.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Webber spoke as a representative of Denmead Parish Council against the inclusion of Little Frenchies Field, Denmead as a Local Reserve Site. In addition to the comments set in a letter the Parish Council had emailed to the Committee, he recommended that the site should instead be used to meet a shortfall in recreation facilities in Denmead. He also stated that there had been a large number of developments at Denmead which meant that the village was meeting its share of housing completions.

In response, Mr Gardner spoke as a representative of the developer of Little Frenchies Field and explained that the proposal to use the site as recreation space had not been raised during the Inquiry and that any development at the site would contribute to the Open Space Fund.

Councillor Stallard, as a Ward Member, also spoke in support of Mr Webber's comments and added that there whilst there may be some alternative sites suitable for residential development in the village, there were no other sites suitable for recreational space.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs Edwards spoke as a representative of the City of Winchester Trust against the Local Reserve Sites in Winchester.

Mr Packer spoke as a representative of the owner of Pitt Manor, Winchester, in support of Local Reserve Sites. He commented that the release of such sites could help retain the character of the town's suburbs by reducing the pressure for higher density infill development.

The Committee also noted that Alresford Town Council had not objected to the Local Reserve Site at Spring Gardens, New Alresford.

At the conclusion of debate, the majority of Members were concerned that, if released, the Local Reserve Sites would be developed as a whole to compensate for West of Waterlooville MDA and that the larger sites could have a lead-in time comparable with MDAs. Concerns were also raised regarding the Inspectors' linkage between delays at the West of Waterlooville MDA and the possible release of sites in Winchester, in addition to the fact that there had been insufficient public consultation. Members also questioned the apparently arbitrary logic of selecting four sites to develop 400 dwellings, particularly if the sites were intended to cover a shortfall at the West of Waterlooville MDA.

In light of this, the Committee agreed to defer this issue and requested that officers reconsider all references to Local Reserve Sites within the proposed modifications, as set out in the appendices of the Report, to a further meeting of the Committee to be held on 9 December 2005 (prior to the Report's consideration by Cabinet on 14 December).

Other Issues

Members agreed to defer MOD 6.39 as, whilst the Inspector had recommended the deletion of "in perpetuity" in reference to the provision of affordable housing, the Committee had indicated that these words should be retained. Officers were instructed to seek further legal advice on the implications for this approach, which would be presented to its next meeting.

With reference to MOD 6.51, Mr Hayter highlighted the need to give more prominence to the Inspectors' comment that to preserve the character of some areas, even the lower end of the density range sought by PPG3 may not be possible. Following debate, the Committee agreed that whilst this was important in implementing the policies, it was not necessary to include it within the Plan.

Councillor Coates questioned why the revised settlement boundary of Corhampton (MOD 6.53) was not further extended to include an exception site that was outside the current development boundary, as had been recommended by the Inspector in Droxford. Following discussion it was agreed that exception sites should only be included within settlement boundaries where specifically recommended by the Inspectors, due to concerns that this may undermine the ability to retain the housing for local needs.

Councillor Evans spoke as a Ward Member for Wickham and on behalf of Wickham Parish Council. She recommended that the Committee extend the policy SF.4 boundaries of Wickham Square (as set out in Appendix 3 of the Report) to include the butcher's shop and hairdressers so as to better protect Wickham as a local retail centre. Following debate, the amendment was agreed.

With reference to MOD13.3, Mr Hayter spoke as a representative of Bishops Waltham Parish Council and of the Bishops Waltham Society. He referred Members to a letter emailed to the Committee and following debate, in which neither Mr Opacic nor Mr Packer (a representative of the owner of Abbey Mill, Bishops Waltham) raised any significant objections, the majority of Mr Hayter's proposed changes were agreed as set out below. During the course of debate on Abbey Mill, Members raised concerns about the loss of bus and lorry parking associated with the development of the site.

MOD13.3 - refer to 'mixed residential and employment use' in explanatory text but retain sub-heading as 'Mixed Uses'

MODs 13.3A, B and D – change references to 'business' use to 'employment'

MOD13.3C – amend new text to state 'Proposals should include a Travel Plan (see Policy T.1) and provision is also likely to be needed for contributions to off-site works to improve access and maximise the sustainability of the overall transport solution (see Policy T.5).'

MOD13.3D – replace with: 'Developers will be expected to enter into planning obligations to ensure the agreed proportions of employment and residential

development (including affordable housing) are provided through a phased programme encouraging retention of existing employment uses and addressing works and/or contributions for decontamination, flood measures, access and transport infrastructure improvements, landscaping (including if possible, restoration of the open water course), open space and other requirements of the Policy.

Following debate, the Committee agreed to the Schedule of Proposed Modifications to the Plan (Chapter 6 and other outstanding matters) as set out in the appendices of the report, subject to the following amendments:

- Page 3, MOD 6.3, 2nd bullet point: Deferred because of its reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Page 5, MOD 6.11: Deferred because of its reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Page 7, MOD 6.15, 1st paragraph: Deferred because of its reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Page 13, MOD 6.33: Deferred because of its reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Page 15, MOD 6.39: Deferred, pending legal advice on the effect of retaining “in perpetuity” in reference to affordable housing and right-to-buy and (iv) because of its reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Page 17, MOD 6.43: Title to be amended to Paragraph 6.53.
- Page 18, MOD 6.44: Amended to include last sentence, but struck-through (-).
- Page 19, MOD 6.49: To include definition of “exception site” in Glossary.
- Page 20, MOD 6.54: Deferred because of its reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Page 20, MOD 6.56: Amended to read “Springvale Road, *Headbourne Worthy*..”
- Page 20, MOD 6.57 in relation to Spring Gardens: Deferred because of its reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Page 21, MOD 6.61 in relation to Pitt Manor: Deferred because of its reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Pages 22-25, Maps 1-4: Deferred because of reference to Local Reserve Sites.
- Page 44, Proposed Modifications to delineation of SF.4 on Wickham Inset Map: Amended to include all of the area covered in the Revised Deposit Plan (including butchers’ shop and hairdressers).
- Page 46, MOD13.3 - refer to ‘mixed residential and employment use’ in explanatory text.
- Pages 46-48, MODs 13.3A, B and D – change references to ‘business’ use to ‘employment’.
- Page 48, MOD13.3D – replace with: ‘Developers will be expected to enter into planning obligations to ensure the agreed proportions of employment and residential development (including affordable housing) are provided through a phased programme encouraging retention of existing employment uses and addressing works and/or contributions for decontamination, flood measures, access and transport infrastructure improvements, landscaping (including if possible restoration of the open water course), open space and other requirements of the Policy.
- Page 51, MOD 14.2: Amended to read: “The preparation of Village ~~and~~ or Neighbourhood Design Statements...”

RESOLVED:

1. That the content of the schedules, maps and other details attached at Appendices 1-8 of the Report be recommended to Cabinet and Council for publication as part of the Proposed Modifications document, and that the Proposed Modifications be published for six weeks public consultation, subject to the above changes.

2. That a further meeting of the Committee be held at 9.30am on Friday 9 December in the Walton Room, Guildhall to consider draft policies and explanatory text regarding replacement Policy H.3 and the Local Reserve sites, prior to consideration by Cabinet on 14 December and full Council on 11 January 2006.

3. That an additional meeting of the Committee be held at 2.30pm on 9 January 2006 in the Walton Room, Guildhall to consider draft Supplementary Planning Documents regarding replacement Policy H.3 and Local Reserve sites, prior to consideration by Cabinet on 18 January 2006.

The meeting commenced at 9.30am and concluded at 4.20pm.
(The Committee adjourned for lunch between 12.15pm and 1.45pm)

Chairman