

WEST OF WATERLOOVILLE FORUM

3 October 2005

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW INQUIRY INSPECTOR'S REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT – WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Winchester City Council has now received the Local Plan Inquiry Inspectors' Report which has been published for information only. This report provides a summary of the Inspector's main recommendations relating to the West of Waterlooville Major Development Area and indicates how the City Council will deal with further proposed modifications to the Plan in response to these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the contents of the report be noted.

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HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCILDETAIL:1.0 Introduction

1.1 Winchester City Council has now received the Report from the Inspectors appointed to consider objections to the Winchester District Local Plan Review. The Report deals with objections which were submitted in writing and those that were discussed at the Public Local Inquiry held between June 2004 and March 2005. It gives details of the recommendations being made by the Inspectors to the City Council, including matters relating to the Waterlooville Major Development Area.

1.2 It is the immediate intention of the City Council to consider the Report and to decide what action to take on each of the Inspectors' recommendations. These recommendations and any proposed action on them will be reported to the City Council's Winchester District Local Plan Committee at a series of meetings during October and November 2005 which will then make recommendations to Cabinet in December 2005. The City Council will then be requested to approve 'Proposed Modifications' for publication in January 2006, with the period of six weeks allowed for the public to comment on them.

1.3 Please note that the Inspector's Report is currently being made available for information only, and that comments on the Report are not being invited from the public. However, comments may be made on the Proposed Modifications during the consultation period in January 2006.

2.0 Summary of Recommendations relating to the West of Waterlooville Major Development Area

2.1 On the matter of principle, the Inspector has found no preferable or available substitute for the Waterlooville MDA strategic housing allocation and has recommended its retention.

2.2 The Inspector has however recommended a number of changes to the Plan, in the main to update and simplify the policy and the text to reflect his understanding of the how far the Masterplan process has advanced during the course of the Inquiry with the approval of the Masterplan Layout by the Forum on 15 April 2004. The detailed changes and the Inspector's reasoned justification can be seen in the relevant extract of the Report attached at Appendix One. An overview and summary of the key points are set out below:

Housing Requirements and Delivery

- 2.3 To provide improved clarity, the Inspector has recommended that Policy NC.2 should be amended to explicitly state that the number of dwellings be expressed as: *at least 2000* rather than *up to 2000* to comply with the Structure Plan and indicating that the requirement relates to the combined area of the MDA in both Districts, notwithstanding that it was assigned to Winchester in the Structure Plan for administrative convenience and because Havant at that time envisaged very little being within their district. It is acknowledged that if the precise figure to be provided in Havant is finally resolved following modification procedures and the adoption of the Havant Borough Local Plan by the time the Winchester Plan is published, it would enable a figure for Winchester to be inserted, although the Inspector does not consider it necessary to place a definitive figure for the amount that should be in Winchester District.
- 2.4 With regards to the reserve allocation, the Inspector has concluded that it accords with the Structure Plan's identification of this locality as a reserve site and found no suitable alternative substitute. However, notwithstanding this fact, the Inspector recommends further changes to Policy NC2 to clarify that the maximum extent of the Reserve Site for up to 1000 dwellings may be reduced in size if higher densities, and by implication more than 2000 dwellings, are achieved in the Baseline Allocation.
- 2.5 To clarify the matter of phasing of the development, the Inspector has recommended a new form of wording to Policy NC.2 as follows:

"it is envisaged that the development of the MDA will commence in several locations simultaneously and it will be necessary to secure a comprehensive development programme to ensure the implementation of all the ancillary infrastructure proceeds in a coherent manner".

Affordable Housing

- 2.6 On the matter of affordable housing, the Inspector concluded that the high proportion of subsidised housing sought through the Local Plan (50%) on so large a site gave rise to concerns with regards to viability, the desire to create a sustainable community and the fact that it is also intended to provide some open market housing at the lowest end of the price range. Accordingly, the Inspector recommends amendment to the Plan to replace the current 50% requirement with "up to 40% affordable housing in the MDA within Winchester District."
- 2.7 Regarding small dwelling provision, the Inspector concludes that the 50% requirement for one and/or two bedrooomed units is reasonable having regard to household size, the assessment of demand and the shortfall in existing provision.

Southern Access Road

- 2.8 In respect of the Southern Access Road, the Inspector has concluded that it does form part of the comprehensive infrastructure for the MDA and should be implemented at an early stage in the development. He recommends that reference to its early provision remains in the Plan to enable the precise details of its timing to be negotiated at the planning application stage and made the subject of legal agreement accompanying any planning permission.

- 2.9 On the matter of the detailed design of the junction of the Southern Access Road with the A3, the Inspector concluded that it would be inappropriate to be prescriptive about the precise location of the proposed junction, which in any case lies outside the District Boundary. He accepted that the final location and design have yet to be determined and may be dependent upon land acquisition, accordingly he is content that the terminology used to refer to 'in the vicinity' of the Ladybridge Roundabout provides sufficient indication as to where it will be generally located.
- 2.10 The Inspector considered further objections relating to the southern access road, in particular those concerns relating to the possible reduction in quality of life (noise, pollution) to the west of Purbrook and further the possible impact of increased traffic along Purbrook Heath Road. The Inspector was satisfied that the detailed layout and junction designs would be scrutinised to ensure that major traffic flows would be directed to routes most capable of accommodating them, together with the promotion of measures where appropriate and necessary to discourage any significant additional traffic from using the rural lanes to the west. Accordingly no changes to the Plan were recommended in this respect.
- 2.11 However, the Inspector does recommend amendments to the Plan to remove reference to the southern access road linking with Purbrook Heath Road and has replaced this with "linking to the A3 in the vicinity of Ladybridge roundabout..." in line with further proposed changes advanced by Winchester City Council during the Inquiry and in the interest of clarity and accuracy as the Inspector regards this Purbrook Heath Road as unsuitable to accommodate traffic flows envisaged from the MDA.

Maurespas Way and Integration

- 2.12 The Inspector has considered Havant Borough Council's concerns that close integration between the MDA and Waterlooville could be impeded by the barrier that Maurespas Way (South) presents. On the issue of closing Maurespas Way and diverting traffic onto the MDA Spine Road, an option preferred by Havant Borough Council, the Inspector notes that if Maurespas Way were closed, the new spine road would then act as a divide itself between the western and eastern parts of the MDA and ultimately carry almost double the traffic flows that Maurespas Way has now. He further notes that although segregated crossing could be made of the MDA spine road, the same is true for Maurespas Way also. The Inspector expresses further concern about the apparent low level of public support upon which the option for closure had been advanced by the Borough Council.
- 2.13 Whilst he acknowledges that the closure of Maurespas Way would indisputably provide unhindered physical integration between the town centre and the MDA, he is not persuaded that it is the only means to achieve apposite linkage. Whilst he is satisfied that some solutions for ensuring integration of the MDA with the town centre are more attractive than others, he notes that several suitable options exist that do not necessitate the closure of Maurespas Way. As the road in any case lies outside of Winchester District, the Inspector does not regard it as necessary or appropriate to specify road closure provisions within the neighbouring Borough as a prerequisite to achieve integration. Accordingly no change is recommended to the Plan.
- 2.14 In the light of his recommendation, the Inspector has further considered Havant Borough Council's alternative suggestion to change policy NC2 to refer to implementing traffic calming measures on Maurespas Way (South) to facilitate integration of the centre with Maurespas Way. However he concludes that this is not

appropriate either given the given the range of alternative possible solutions that might be advanced , which could include grade separated crossings of the road. He advises that as the areas involved lie outside of the MDA the issue would be more appropriately addressed in Havant's emerging Town Centre Urban Design Framework (UDF) or as part of the consideration of any major planning application that may be submitted before the UDF is adopted.

Resource Centre

- 2.15 The Inspector heard objections relating to the need for and location of the resource centre and concerns about traffic implications. He concluded that the decision on the facilities to be provided and its precise location within the employment area would ultimately be determined through a planning application, in part influenced by the County Council's consultation on their Material Resources Strategy, which in turn would be incorporated into the Minerals and Waste Development Framework. However he has recommended deletion of reference to a Biomass Plant in line with Further Proposed Changes suggested by Winchester City Council and to address the County Council's concerns.
- 2.16 He further concluded that he was satisfied that the proposal merely identified and safeguards the site, in accordance with SEERA (South East England Regional Assembly) advice. He accepted that detailed proposals would necessarily evolve following in-depth studies to ensure that they meet environmental, technical, operational objectives and that any planning application would need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement and Transport Assessment and conditions or legal agreements applied to impose appropriate controls. The principle of the resource centre therefore was endorsed.
- 2.17 In respect of traffic matters, the Inspector endorsed Pre-Inquiry Changes put forward by Winchester City Council to address objectors concerns regarding possible traffic impacts on nearby settlements. He further concluded that three additional settlements should be added to the list already included in the text: 'Purbrook, Widley and Waterlooville' since routeing restriction in Winchester District could have implications on those parts of the neighbouring Havant Borough.
- 2.18 Finally the Inspector recommends renaming the resource centre a 'Resource Recovery Park', in response to an objection by the County Council.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

3.0 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 3.1 Winchester City Council's Corporate Priorities 2005 - 2008 includes six key service areas relating to the provision of affordable homes in safe and pleasant environments; community safety; minimising pollution and waste and making efficient use of resources; social inclusion; economic prosperity and; improving access to cultural and sporting activities.
- 3.2 Havant Borough Council's Corporate Strategy 2003 –2008 has similar focus relating to planning the community's land use and development; strengthening the economy, enhancing the environment, making safer & healthier communities; enabling better housing, working with young people and supporting the improvement of educational achievement in the Borough.

3.3 Building a sustainable community at Waterlooville will directly help both Councils to achieve their corporate objectives.

4.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

4.1 Winchester City Council has made the necessary staffing and budget provision to respond to the Inspector's Report by way of Proposed Modifications, and subsequent adoption of the Local Plan Review.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix One: Extract from the Inspector's Report relating to the West of Waterlooville Major Development Area.