

**LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY GROUP****14 September 2020**

Attendance:

Councillors  
Porter (Chairperson)Brook  
Evans  
HorrillRutter  
Thompson[Full audio recording and video recording](#)

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**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Ferguson.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

No declarations were made.

**3. TO NOTE ANY REQUEST FROM COUNCILLORS TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ON AN AGENDA ITEM**

Councillors Bell and Hutchison addressed the meeting as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Bell stated that considerable changes were proposed in the planning reforms and that the briefing for parish councils was welcomed. There was considerable emphasis on development in the southeast of England which raised questions of additional pressures and affordability. There were particular constraints in the east of the district due to the South Downs National Park (SDNP), which comprised 40% of the council's area. The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) were also seeking a greenbelt in the south of the district which would lead to even more pressure on the central, western and northern parts for development. There were also implications for affordable housing and the provision exception sites and the emphasis of the proposals for provision of first homes would have implications for those desiring family homes in rural sites. The second paper 'Planning for the Future' and proposals for zoning system would lead to different designations which would affect the Winchester area. Work would be required through local neighbourhood plans to consider the implications of the zoning and protection. Finally, the launch of the new local plan also required a separate council website.

Councillor Hutchison raised questions over the role of design statements, the protection of open spaces and the designation of settlement boundaries,

including those on the periphery of Winchester Town which had implications for open spaces.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2020**

Arising out of consideration of the minutes, a member raised questions on the progress on the publication of the Visual Design Statements. The Strategic Planning Manger responded to the question.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 July 2020 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Patrick Davies addressed the meeting as summarised briefly below.

Mr Davies stated that it would have been beneficial if the officers' presentation to be made at the meeting could have been made available to the public in advance of the meeting. The city council's website for the local plan was also out of date and required revising. This was important if the public were going to be involved in the new local plan process. He asked if the proposals in the planning reforms which proposed more housing through an algorithm formula for Winchester would be challenged and how. The council had recently published the Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Uses Survey on Winchester, which he stated had been undertaken in September 2019 and he asked about the status of background material produced pre Covid 19 and before commencement of the new local plan process.

Emma Back (Winchester Sport Art and Leisure Trust) addressed the meeting as summarised briefly below.

The City of Winchester Trust and the CPRE had spoken at the previous meeting of the Advisory Group on the protection of green space through the local plan process. This would be both in the countryside, which had its own protection through for example the SDNP but also in the city settlement area where public open spaces were small and limited and required protection. Action to protect key areas of recreational open space and other open spaces around the city was required as sites were vulnerable. Open spaces for sport and recreation should be recognised in the new local plan and be given protection status under the new planning laws, including council owned sites. In addition, she asked if Village Green Space designation would still apply and could sites still be put forward by the public for this designation under the new local plan process.

The Chairperson thanked the speakers for their personal views and clarified that these were not necessarily the views of the Council. Councillor Porter responded to a point made by Patrick Davies clarifying that the survey on Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Uses had been written in spring 2020 and did acknowledge the effect of Covid 19. Other background papers on the website

would be the up-dated and revised as required as part of the new local plan process.

6. **PRESENTATION AT THE MEETING - PROPOSED PLANNING REFORMS AND IMPACT ON THE NEW WINCHESTER LOCAL PLAN**

The Chairperson stated that on the 6 August 2020 the Government had published two papers for consultation. The first was a white paper: 'Planning for the future' which had a deadline for consultation on the 29 October 2020. The second paper was entitled: 'Changes to the current planning system' with a deadline for response of the 1 October 2020.

The Strategic Director's [presentation](#) refers and the officers responded to Members' questions on the following:

- How would high quality design be decided upon?
- How was the formula for housing allocations derived?
- The inter-relationship between the SDNP's housing allocation and that of Winchester, as 40 per cent of the district's area was within the South Downs National Park.
- The definition of sustainable development and did it include infrastructure.
- The implications of removing the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities.
- The implications for neighbourhood plans, of which parish councils were very supportive and how communities could be involved in the local plan process.
- Methods for the city council to assist parish councils and local communities within a limited time period in order that the best designs and plans were included in the pattern book, in order that the new local plan could best meet the requirements of the new planning system. Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans could assist towards achieving good design codes.
- That there should be cross political representation to the Government over its proposals and implications for the district and also the implications for the SDNP and Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) and other local authorities the area.
- The action that could be taken in the short term towards the renewal of the local plan. Neighbourhood Plans were involved and lengthy to produce and alternatives might be considered.
- How could localism be reflected in the local plan process, including Conservation Area Assessments and Village Design Statements.

- The city council's capacity to undertake the new local plan process and the skills that were available to deliver the new requirements and also the assistance that could be provided to local communities to assist in their preparation for the new local plan.
- For growth areas, whether the Pattern Design Book could lead to more uniform development that lacked individuality. In renewal areas how would neighbours be protected from development and how would Conservation Areas be approached? Would the design codes be suitable for Winchester's smaller communities and how would the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) be managed and infrastructure provided?
- The implications of the proposals for the future work of the Planning Committee.
- The short-term effect on the delivery of affordable housing if the threshold for contribution towards affordable houses was raised from 10 units to 40 or 50 units.
- That consideration be given to the council becoming a pilot authority for the new planning system. The advantage was that the council had already undertaken considerable work and had employed Consultants to develop a stand-alone website for the Local Plan but had put them on hold and would need to be reviewed in light of the emphasis on digital engagement. . Having the SDNP and PfSH and a historic core both to the city as well as the rural villages would put Winchester in a good position to be a pilot.

Following debate the following actions were agreed:

1. To proceed with Conservation Area Assessments and Village Design Statements and Area Design Assessments for the centre of Winchester.
2. To engage in discussions with the South Downs National Park, Partnership for South Hampshire, to lobby local Members of Parliament, and the Chamber of Commerce and related organisations in order that they understand the implications of the proposed changes.
3. To identify what the Government proposals would mean if the threshold for affordable housing was increased from 10 units to either 40 or 50 units and to be conscious that first homes link then to second homes and to last homes and to recognise this is important and also to consider the mix of affordable housing in relationship to home ownership.
4. That the council puts itself forward as a pilot authority for the new planning system.

5. That members of the Advisory Group be invited to virtually attend the parish council briefing on Monday 21 September 2020 and also the meeting of the Winchester Town Forum to be held on Thursday 17 September 2020.
6. That a work programme be prepared including engagement with local communities.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.55 pm

Chairperson