

Local Plan Strategic Issues and Priorities Consultation Report

Winchester District Local Plan 2039

May 2021



Winchester
City Council

Structure of the Report

Section 1 – Executive summary

Section 2 – Background

Section 3 – Production timeline of Local Plan

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This consultation statement sets out how the council has involved residents and key stakeholders in the preparation of the new Winchester District Local Plan 2018 to 2038 in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Plan will look ahead to 2039, identifying the main areas for sustainable development and growth. Additionally, it will establish policies and guidance to ensure local development is built in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.2 The new Local Plan will replace the existing Local Plan 1 – Joint Core Strategy (adopted 2013 and covering the period up to 2031) and Local Plan 2 – Development Management Policies and Site Allocations (adopted 2017) and the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (adopted 2019). The existing development plan also includes the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2015) and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted 2013).
- 1.3 This statement has been prepared to meet Regulation 22 (1) (c) and sets out the various consultation methods the council have undertaken from the launch of the new Local Plan through to the Strategic Issues and Priorities stage. The statement is a key document which demonstrates how the council has encouraged community and stakeholder engagement at each stage of the Local Plan process. It will be updated as the Plan progresses through future stages, to provide a record of the main issues raised at each consultation up to the Submission stage of the Local Plan document.

Identify issues and collect evidence

- 1.4 The council agreed at its Cabinet on 18 July 2018 to launch preparation of the new Local Plan. The council undertook an initial consultation on the range of issues that the Local Plan should cover. This consultation ran for 6 weeks over the summer of 2018. A total of 146 responses were received, which can be seen [here](#).
- 1.5 Work had been progressing on the new Local Plan in accordance with the timetable in the council's adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2018. This included finalising the key elements of the evidence base. A Strategic Issues and Options document (formerly referred to as the "Prospectus") was planned, which would consult on key issues and show how the council's climate change declaration was being woven into the Local Plan. This document was the subject of a presentation to the Local Plan Advisory Panel on 21 July 2020 and was due to be considered by Cabinet on 18 August 2020, with consultation planned for the Autumn 2020. In the period between these meetings, the Government consulted

on a number of radical changes to the planning system and a decision was taken to pause work on the Local Plan, as set out in the LDS, in order to fully understand and respond to the implications of these changes on the production of the plan.

1.6 As a result of the Government's proposed changes to the planning system and White Paper "Planning for the Future" consultations, the Cabinet agreed at the December 2020 Cabinet meeting to approve a Local Plan Action Plan (LPAP), and to undertake consultation on 'Strategic Issues & Priorities' in spring 2021.

1.7 The Cabinet agreed on 20 January 2021 to the high-level 'Strategic Issues and Priorities' consultation on the Local Plan, to be undertaken in February-March 2021. They also agreed to update the LDS to align it with the Local Plan Action Plan and to keep it under review as and when further information is known on changes to the planning system.

Strategic Issues and Priorities consultation

1.8 Consultation on the 'Strategic Issues and Priorities' document started on 15 February 2021 and ran for an extended period due to the Covid-19 lockdown in place at the time, until 12 April 2021. The new Local Plan sets out the strategic vision, objectives, and spatial strategy for the district, as well as the planning policies which will guide future development. In order to reach as many people as possible, the consultation coincided with the launch of dedicated Local Plan website www.localplan.winchester.gov.uk

1.9 The Strategic Issues and Priorities document focussed on 9 key issues:

- 1) Carbon neutrality
- 2) Biodiversity and the natural environment
- 3) Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- 4) Homes for all
- 5) Creating a vibrant economy
- 6) Promoting sustainable transport
- 7) Living well
- 8) Low carbon infrastructure and local Plan viability
- 9) Delivery and success of the Local Plan

1.10 For each issue, a range of questions were presented. Stakeholders were invited to submit their comments to identify their top priorities to accommodate sustainable growth across the district.

1.11 The council held several virtual information events in March 2021 and invited stakeholders to register to attend. Further details about these events, including copies of invitation letters/events and correspondence are included at Section 3 below and in Appendix 1. The main findings of the consultation can be found in Section 3 of this statement.

RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence 2021

1.12 The Winchester City Council Local Plan Consultation received both the category winner and overall winner awards in the RTPI South East Awards for Planning Excellence 2021. This achievement marks the hard work of the strategic planning team among many others who contributed their time and dedication to the consultation in the interest of residents and stakeholders.



2. Background

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

- 2.1 The SCI document sets out how the council will involve the community in planning matters. Full details of the current adopted SCI can be viewed [here](#).
- 2.2 The SCI was reviewed and amended temporarily in respect of the approach to the publicity of planning policy documents and planning applications, following Government guidance and requirements regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of government guidance, public meetings, exhibitions, meetings with planning applicants and agents etc. were all held virtually at the time of consulting on the Strategic Issues & Priorities document, in order to comply with legislation and the national lockdown at the time.

The Integrated Impact Assessment

- 2.3 The council appointed Land Use Consultants (LUC) to prepare an “Integrated Impact Assessment” (including Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Health and Equalities assessment) of the Strategic Issues and Priorities document. This was used to assess the impacts of the options in the Strategic Issues and Priorities document and similar assessments will be undertaken at each of the key stages of Local Plan production (see Section 3).

Local Plan Advisory Group (LPAG)

2.4A Local Plan Advisory Group has been established and is convened to receive updates and discuss matters relating to the preparation of the Council's Local Plan and to assist the Cabinet and Council in their decision making, to ensure:

- that the preparation of the Local Plan is integrated with the wider aims and objectives of the Council on behalf of its communities
- that Members are actively informed on progress of the Local Plan and provided with appropriate opportunities to participate in policy development
- that there is a shared understanding of issues relating to the preparation of the evidence base, arrangements for community involvement, duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, preparation and publication of documents and associated public consultation
- that there are high levels of public engagement with the preparation of the Local Plan.

3 Production Timeline of the Local Plan

3.1 The creation of a new Local Plan requires a number of thorough and robust stages of consultation. This is to enable early and ongoing engagement with the local community, businesses and organisations to develop a comprehensive document, tailored to the needs of the district in terms of strategy and the policies required.

3.2 The sections below outline the main consultation stages of the emerging Local Plan. Details of future consultations will be added, up until the submission date of the Local Plan. At that point this Consultation Statement will be submitted to the Secretary of State as one of the key documents to be considered by the Inspector undertaking the Local Plan Examination.

Key Local Plan Stages undertaken

A: Identify issues and collect evidence

3.3 The council agreed at its Cabinet on 18 July 2018 to launch preparation of a new Local Plan. When adopted, the new Local Plan will replace the existing Local Plan Part 1 (Core Strategy), Local Plan Part 2 (Development Management and Allocations) and the Gypsy and Traveller & Travelling Showpersons' Development Plan Document. The Local Plan will cover the administrative area of Winchester City Council except for that part within the South Downs National Park, which has its own Local Plan.

3.4 A Local Plan launch consultation was held under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (England) (Local Planning) Regulations 2012. This consultation commenced on 24 July 2018 and closed on Friday 21 September 2018, allowing an 8-week period for comment due to the summer holidays. All people and organisations on the Council's Local Plan database were invited to

comment, including statutory consultees and those who had signed up to the Local Plan e-newsletter.

3.5 Views were invited on the scope and content of the Plan and the range of issues that the Local Plan should cover. A number of questions were created to act as prompts to generate constructive commentary. 146 responses were received from a range of organisations and individuals from across the district. The key issues raised in the responses were set out in a [report to the Council's Cabinet](#) (Local Plan) Committee in December 2018, including those from statutory consultees.

3.6 Follow-up workshops were held with Parish Councils in October 2018 and Winchester Town Forum in January 2019. These focused on the main issues affecting the Parishes and Winchester Town and the role of the Local Plan. In March 2019 two further workshops were held to which all Parish Councils were invited. These explored in more detail the issues raised at the earlier workshops, including local communities' priorities, considerations in allocating sites for development, and updating information on local facilities and services. These workshops were attended by representatives from 19 Parish Councils and details of the outcomes were reported to Cabinet in June 2019.

3.7 Several consultants were appointed in summer 2019 to undertake key evidence studies. A key requirement of these evidence studies included requirements for discussion and consultation with various stakeholders. These included:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – housing providers, the Universities, the Ministry of Defence, local estate agents, Community Action Hampshire
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) – individual travellers, neighbouring local authorities, housing providers, national traveller organisations
- Employment Land Study – stakeholder workshop held with commercial agents, business representatives, etc.
- Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study – Business Improvement Districts and Chambers of Commerce, retail and leisure operators

3.8 Work had been progressing on the new Local Plan in accordance with the timetable in the council's adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2018. This included finalising the key elements of the evidence base. A Strategic Issues and Options document (formerly referred to as the "Prospectus"), was planned, which would consult on key issues and show how the council's climate change declaration was being woven into the heart of the Local Plan.

3.9 Due to the Government's planned reforms to the planning system being announced in August 2020, the Local Plan making process did not meet the milestone in the LDS for consulting on an Issue & Options document in October 2020. In addition to this, due to COVID-19, local elections did not take place in May 2020 as planned and were moved to May 2021 instead. In recognition of the fact that the consultation was taking place during a national lockdown the public consultation period on the Strategic Issues & Priorities document was extended from 6 weeks to 8 weeks (the last two weeks of the consultation were during the pre-election period).

B: Strategic Issues and Priorities consultation

3.10 The Strategic Issues and Priorities document identifies the issues to be addressed in the new Local Plan and builds on the evidence base. At this stage the council were not making specific choices regarding “preferred options”, or identified sites, instead it presented a range of questions on issues and priorities and invited comments on what the Local Plan will cover, and how it should deal with these matters. Alongside this, the council also conducted a Call for Sites, Integrated Impact Assessment and Air Quality SPD consultation.

3.11 The launch of the public consultation period coincided with a new dedicated standalone Local Plan website www.localplan.winchester.gov.uk that had been specifically designed to engage with a wide range of audiences. Prior to the launch of the 8-week public consultation, which ran from the 15th February to 12th April 2021, and the new Local Plan website going live a series of briefings were held:

- Town Forum presentation 18th January 2021
- Councillor briefing 10th February 2021
- Parish Council briefing 8th February 2021

3.12 During the public consultation the following events were held which used Slido software to enable audience participation at different days of the week and different times of the day in order to try and maximise participation:

Four ‘virtual’ consultation events were held on:

- Thursday 4 March 2021 – 2pm
- Tuesday 9 March 2021 – 7pm
- Friday 12 March 2021 – 10am
- Saturday 20 March 2021 – 10.30am

Two specialised events were held on:

- Living Well 15th March 2021 – 2pm
- Carbon neutrality 17th March 2021 – 2pm

Session title and date	Number of sign ups	Number of attendees
Winchester District Local Plan public virtual event 1 04/03/21	37	32-37
Winchester District Local Plan public virtual event 2 09/03/21	25	17-21
Winchester District Local Plan public virtual event 3 12/03/21	59	38-43

Living well – Winchester District Local Plan specialised event 15/03/21	25	21
Carbon neutrality – Winchester District Local Plan specialised event 18/03/21	104	78
Winchester District Local Plan public virtual event 4 20/03/21	62	33-38

3.13 After the 8-week public consultation had closed, 2202 individual representations had been received through a combination of responding to Citizens Space, making comments as part of the interactive events via Slido software, Twitter polls, emails and participating in polls on the new Local Plan website.

3.14 Please click [here](#) to view LPAG meeting agendas for more details on the Local Plan consultation respondents and responses received.

3.15 The consultation was designed to:

- Be consistent with the core priorities outlined in the Council Plan, which covers the period of 2020 – 2025.
- Recognise and thank people for taking time to respond to the consultation to help shape the future of the district
- Encourage people to get involved in the conversation about the new Local Plan
- Demonstrate Winchester City Council wants everyone across the district to be part of the Local Plan journey

3.16 The 9 key issues that formed the basis of consultation were:

- Carbon Neutrality;
- Biodiversity and the Natural Environment;
- Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment;
- Homes for All;
- Creating a Vibrant Economy;
- Promoting Sustainable Transport and Active Travel;
- Living Well;
- Low Carbon Infrastructure and Local Plan Viability;
- Delivery and Success of the Local Plan

CARBON NEUTRALITY

3.16.1 The overarching objective of the new Local Plan is carbon neutrality. The council has declared a Climate Emergency and has set an ambition for the wider district to become carbon neutral with its partners by 2030. The sections below set out how the consultation invited comments on the key issues.

The city council has declared a climate emergency (June 2019) with the aim for a carbon neutral council by 2024 and the wider district by 2030. The Local Plan is only one of the tools that will support a reduction in carbon emission across the district. The consultation asked about a strategic policy on climate change and a number of 'local policies' which would assist the council with moving towards carbon neutrality.

BIODIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

3.16.2 The consultation asked for views on:

- Biodiversity net gain and whether off site offsetting/ financial contributions should be allowed
- Allocation of land for open space or biodiversity net gain, to provide opportunities for off-site mitigation of the effects of new development
- Approaches to countryside protection and whether or not a new Green Belt is needed or justified in the district.

CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

3.16.3 The consultation asked for views on:

- Whether existing heritage policies are adequate
- How the Local Plan should support energy efficiency improvements in Listed Buildings whilst preventing harm to heritage features

HOMES FOR ALL

3.16.4 Four alternative high level strategic options for accommodating housing need were consulted on:

- The current approach of distributing development to a sustainable hierarchy of settlements
- Focusing on Winchester itself and other larger / more sustainable settlements
- One or more completely new strategic allocations or new settlements
- Dispersing development around the district largely in proportion to the size of existing settlements

VIBRANT ECONOMY

3.16.5 Changes to work patterns and possible reduction in footfall in town centres may adversely influence vitality and economic viability.

The consultation asked for views on:

- The types of economic development should we consider
- The future role of town centres and the uses within them
- Rural employment opportunities
- How the Local Plan can support working from home
- How the Local Plan can support the development of a green economy and carbon neutrality

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

3.16.6 The consultation asked for views on:

- Whether the existing policies are ambitious enough
- Whether development should be concentrated in locations which already have cycling, walking and public transport opportunities
- Whether or not additional Park & Ride facilities are needed

LIVING WELL

3.16.7 The places we build today will influence the health and wellbeing of our residents in the future.

The consultation asked for views on:

- Access to open space in the district, in order to protect health and wellbeing and reduce inequality
- How to create strong communities and neighbourhoods which support health and wellbeing of our residents into the future
- The 15-minute neighbourhood concept and how it might develop

LOW CARBON INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLAN VIABILITY

3.16.8 The consultation asked for views on a number of possible strategies/approaches towards low carbon infrastructure in the district, such as:

- Supporting proposals for renewable energy and low carbon energy infrastructure
- Supporting proposals for domestic battery storage facilities to be built in tandem with low carbon energy infrastructure

ENABLING DELIVERY AND SUCCESS OF THE LOCAL PLAN

3.16.9 Monitoring is important to ensure local plan policies are efficient and effective.

The consultation asked for any suggestions of good examples of:

- Successful monitoring frameworks
- Monitoring indicators to track progress towards the net zero by 2030 target

The consultation was open to all, including those who are visiting or live, work and have businesses in Winchester, Councillors and Parish Councils. In order for the Council to fulfil its Duty to Cooperate obligations it also consulted the following bodies:

- Statutory consultees (i.e. Natural England, Highways England, Historic England, Environment Agency, NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning groups)
- Neighbouring Planning Authorities and Town/Parish Council
- Environmental and conservation groups (e.g. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Friends of the Earth)
- Community and voluntary groups (these include “Hard to reach” groups) such as:
 - Black and Minority Ethnic groups
 - Disability groups
 - Elderly groups
 - Faith groups
 - Young people
 - Gypsy and Traveller groups
- Resident’s associations
- Registered Housing Associations
- Landowners and developers
- Local businesses
- Infrastructure providers (e.g. Transport providers/operators).

The Council is committed to reaching out to “Hard to reach” groups which include groups such as:

- Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME)
- Disability groups
- Elderly groups
- Faith groups
- Young people
- Gypsy and Traveller groups

In order to reach out to Gypsy and Traveller groups, the Council contacted agents who frequently represent these groups within the district.

Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have been used to inform young people about the consultation.

The Living Well specialist event was open to all faith groups to participate in. Organisations representing individuals who have dementia were present at this event also.

B: Consultation Strategy

3.17 Radio advertisements

3.17.1 Radio advertisements have been aired on Wave 105 which provide a short summary of the consultation.

3.17.2 This radio advert was placed on Wave 105 radio which ran at different times of the day for two separate weeks. The first radio advertisement started on the 22.2.21 and ran until 28.2.21 and the second week ran from 11.3.21 to 18.3.21.

3.18 Website

3.18.1 The consultation website shared the content of the SIP and invited stakeholders to submit comments and submit answers to a series of short polls and questions. The website listed the dates of consultation events which stakeholders could register to attend (see below for details).

3.19 Council Platforms

3.19.1 The consultation was also publicised on the following Council platforms:

Name of publication	When is it published
Parish Connect	Every month
Your Council news (e-newsletter for residents)	Bi-weekly
City Voice (internal staff newsletter)	Weekly
About Winchester (large resident newsletter)	Twice yearly
Winchester Business Bulletin	Monthly

3.20 Social media advertising

3.20.1 There was paid, targeted advertising on Instagram and Facebook, alongside organic social media posts on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook to promote awareness of the consultation.

Paid advertising on Facebook and Instagram - Age breakdown of metrics

Age of audience	Reach (Number of individuals who have seen the	Post engagements	Post reactions	Unique link clicks (to the website)	Post comments	Post shares
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	adverts*)					
Unknown	112					
13-17	4					
18-24	65,874	463	371	50	1	
25-34	67,299	431	252	77	3	
35-44	34,730	230	74	34	2	1
45-54	24,824	219	49	31	11	3
55-64	16,560	278	42	45	10	2
65+	10,008	391	42	75	17	9
Total	104,831	2,012	830	311	44	15

*Total takes into account overlap from each advert and is provided by Facebook directly, age breakdown is the sum from each advert age breakdown so may include individuals who have seen multiple adverts and have been counted as separate individuals

Across Facebook organic posts 10,271 accounts were reached, with a total of 508 post engagements.

Across Twitter organic posts (including Twitter polls) 16,723 accounts were reached, with a total of 370 post engagements including 72 link clicks to the Local Plan website.

3.21 Posters

3.21.1 A poster was designed to advertise the consultation. The posters were displayed at GP surgeries, Parish Council notice boards, car parks and the local hospital. The poster was placed outside the main reception of the council's offices, at the Broadway and Guildhall. Posters were also sent to all supermarkets, convenience stores and petrol stations in the district.

3.21.2 Posters were also sent to Whiteley shopping centre and posters were displaced at 8 bus shelters around the district in order to raise awareness of the consultation to those using buses and people walking past bus shelters.

3.22 Video Endorsement

3.22.1 A video message from the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment and Health & Well Being explaining the Local Plan Strategic Issues and Priorities was placed on the website. This video was also available on YouTube and had 116 views.

3.23 **Email Banner**

3.23.1 This was placed on staff emails to advertise the consultation and how to access it online.

3.24 **Branding**

3.24.1 The 'Your Place, Your Plan' branding was used on the Local Plan website. The branding has also been displayed on Facebook pages and on emails sent to stakeholders.

3.25 **Press advert**

3.25.1 A statutory advertisement and an advertisement was placed in the Mid Hants Observer and an advertised was also placed in Hampshire Chronicle and online.

3.26 **Notification Emails**

3.26.1 Emails were sent to these groups to inform them of the consultation.

3.27 The following methods were used to capture stakeholder feedback during the consultation:

- 2202 Total responses to the Strategic Issues and Priorities Consultation, including:
 - 603 consultation respondents on Citizenspace survey;
 - 104 website poll submissions;
 - 108 total votes on twitter polls;
 - 1183 feedback emails received;
 - 154 Slido stakeholder participants across live consultation events;
 - And 50 response letters received.