

Head of Planning Policy – Winchester District Local Plan  
Winchester City Council  
City Offices  
Colebrook Street  
Winchester  
SO23 9LJ

**BY EMAIL** - [planningpolicy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@winchester.gov.uk)

12<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**Your ref:** -  
**Our ref:** **KPPC/7552**

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Proposed Submission Winchester District Local Plan – Regulation 19 Consultation Draft  
Representations made on behalf of Macra Ltd and in respect of proposed Omission Site: Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham (WI24)**

The following representation is made on behalf of Macra Ltd, who have instructed Ken Parke Planning Consultants Ltd to make representations on their behalf.

We have submitted representations in respect of the legal and technical matters relating to the Local Plan, and indeed in relation to all of the specific policies both strategic and non-strategic, and moreover specifically with respect to our client's land interest, *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, designated site reference 'WI24' within the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) (2023), which we consider should be included within the Proposed Submission Local Plan as an Omission Site.

For the reasons set out, we consider that there is appropriate justification for material changes to the Proposed Submission Local Plan in order to incorporate *Land at Mayles Farm* as a strategic development allocation for Wickham, either alongside, or in direct replacement of the two proposed strategic allocations;

- *Site WI02 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham; and,*
- *Site WI03 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road.*

Having regard for the detailed representations made, we request that, should the Winchester District Proposed Submission Local Plan (herein 'PSLP') be formally submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public (EIP) that we be permitted to attend and give both further written and oral evidence at the relevant hearing sessions to put forward our concerns in relation to the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan, and to promote *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham (WI24)* on behalf of those instructing us.

We also request to be kept updated on all progress with the PSLP once Winchester City Council has decided how it intends to proceed.



Anniversary House  
23 Abbott Road  
Bournemouth BH9 1EU

Tel: (01202) 538800  
Fax: (01202) 538808

E-mail: [info@kppcltd.co.uk](mailto:info@kppcltd.co.uk)  
[www.kenparkeplanning.com](http://www.kenparkeplanning.com)

**Winchester City Council  
Pre-Submission Local Plan  
Regulation 19 Consultation**

**LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL COMPLIANCE**

## Legal and Procedural Compliance

The preparation of a Local Plan is a process governed by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (PCPA), which places a duty on Councils to carry out plan making with the primary objective of 'contributing to the achievement of sustainable development'. Alongside this, the Town and Country Planning Act (2008) reinforces the obligation at Paragraph 19(1A) of the PCPA that Councils ensure that their development plan documents taken as a whole include policies that are: *'designed to ensure that the development and use of land in the Local Planning Authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to climate change'* and, at Paragraph 19(1B) that the plan *'identifies the strategic priorities for development and use of the land within the LPA's area'*.

The Council are required, as Paragraph 19(5) of the PCPA confirms, to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of the proposals set out within the development document and report of their findings. This reporting should form part of the Sustainability Appraisal prepared alongside the Local Plan and should justify why the Council has made particular decisions in view of the desire to ensure sustainable development.

The baseline conditions for legal compliance of a Local Plan require that the EIP Inspector consider whether the document:

1. Satisfies the requirements of Sections 19 and 24(1) of the PCPA 2004; which require that the Council has regard for National Policy and other documents which are to be Local Development Plan Documents;
2. Satisfies those regulations under Section 17(7), and regulations under Section 36 of the PCPA 2004; relating to the time at which steps in the preparation of the Local Development Plan Document must be taken and their form and content, and the procedural guidance provided by the Secretary of State in relation to the preparation of Local Development Documents including matters such as the consideration of any representations made;
3. Is sound; requiring that it is 'positively prepared' and based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements; and,
4. Complies with the duty of the LPA as set out at Section 33A of the PCPA 2003 in relation to its preparation; comprising the 'Duty to Co-operate'.

### ***(1) Does the Proposed Submission Local Plan Have Regard for National Policy?***

In the same way that 'Sustainable Development' is central to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the direction provided with respect to the determination of planning applications, the NPPF also confirms at Paragraph 11, that plans should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for plan making this means specifically that:

- a. All plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to meet the development needs of their area, align growth and infrastructure, improve the environment, mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects;

- b. Strategic policies should, as a minimum provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met in neighbouring areas, unless:
- i. The application of policies within the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or,
  - ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

The NPPF provides specific policy direction at Section 3 – Plan Making, which provides clear requirements that LPAs must adhere to with respect to the preparation of a Local Development Plan.

At Paragraph 15 the NPPF confirms that *‘succinct and up to date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area’*.

At Paragraph 16 the NPPF confirms that plans should:

- *‘be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable’;*
- *‘contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals’;* and moreover,
- *be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees.*

Paragraph 20 of the NPPF requires that strategic policies set out an *‘overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places to ensure sufficient provision is made for: housing, including affordable housing, and all other types of development’*. It is noted that this should occur in the frame of the presumption in favour of sustainable development defined by Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, and in this regard that conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and infrastructure are considered, and appropriate measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation are incorporated.

Paragraph 21 is clear that there should be a *‘distinction between strategic policies; limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area, and non-strategic policies which deal with detailed matters’*.

Paragraph 22 confirms that strategic policies should *‘look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from the adoption date to anticipate and respond to long term requirements and opportunities such as major improvements in infrastructure’*.

The overarching direction of National Policy with respect to the preparation of a Local Plan therefore requires, above all else, that development is sustainable and appropriately plans for the level of development required to meet local needs for all types of development across the plan period of at minimum 15 years. Local Authorities are not bounded by planning for only a 15-year plan period. They can consider a longer period if appropriate, and in the case of Winchester City Council, it is clear that a

decision was taken to plan for a 20 year plan horizon to provide a greater degree of certainty as to how the strategic priorities of the district will be met from 2020-2040. However, it should be noted that the plan period was extended from its original 2038 end date, and we are now almost 5-years into the plan period before the PSLP has even been submitted for examination. There is a realistic likelihood that, by the time the PSLP has been through examination, that there will be a need to extend the plan period further in order to meet this minimum requirement of a 15-year plan period.

We consider at this stage that Winchester Council should consider extending the plan period to 2041 as a minimum in order to ensure that a minimum of 15 clear years will remain from the date of adoption.

Within this frame, the Council is required to demonstrate where the development will be located and how the need will be met and not simply to leave it to chance how development needs shall be met. Only in this manner will the Local Plan provide an appropriate positive vision for the area and be considered to have been positively prepared in a manner that is both aspirational and deliverable.

Whilst we consider that the Council has sought to plan broadly for the development needs of the District, we do not consider that the Council has had full and appropriate regard for the direction of National Policy in this respect. The Council has not sought to plan positively for development in a manner that guarantees that the level of development required will meet its objectively assessed local needs, in particular, for housing over the prescribed 20 year period.

The Council proposes that 1,495 homes will be delivered within the plan period by way of 'windfall development'. Having regard for the objectively assessed housing need for Winchester District, which stands at 15,465 homes, approximately 12.3% of the housing need is left unallocated with an indication that this will come forwards on unallocated windfall sites within the plan period.

Winchester Council's approach to windfall development is considered to be evidenced by the '*Assessment of Windfall Trends and Potential (February 2021)*' (*the AWTP*).

Paragraph 72 of the NPPF is clear that where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of an anticipated housing supply, there should be '*compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply*'. When considering the imposition of a windfall allowance this should therefore be realistic having regard for historic windfall delivery rates and the Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).

With reference to the SHELAA, Winchester Council consider that there are significant opportunities for growth across the plan area; however the majority of these opportunities are located outside of settlement boundaries, which would require a formal policy change, either through a strategic allocation, or relaxing of settlement boundaries, in order to be deliverable.

With reference specifically to the Larger Rural Settlement of Wickham, all of the available and deliverable sites are located outside of the defined settlement boundary, within the countryside, and thus in locations where a formal allocation would be required to enable the land to come forwards in accordance with the Council's spatial strategy.

Within the AWTP the Council have tabulated the historic rates of windfall completions for each of the Market Town and Larger Village settlements covered by Policy MTRA3 of the Winchester Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2013). With respect to development within Wickham, it is clear that, in general, there are very few windfall completions at all. The overall rate of windfall delivery between 2012 and 2019 is dramatically increased by a single occurrence of the delivery of 40 homes within the years 2015-2016 and latterly within 2016-2017, through the delivery of the development at the former Wickham Laboratories; now Wykeham Court retirement housing development. This was a unique opportunity within Wickham, comprising a lone brownfield development site. There is no realistic prospect of this level of housing delivery coming forwards again within the settlement boundary.

Table 7: Net MTRA2 Settlement Housing Completions by type 2012 – 2019 - Assessment of Windfall Trends and Potential (2021)

Year	Bishop's Waltham		Colden Common		Denmead		Kings Worthy		New Alresford		Swanmore		Waltham Chase		Wickham		Total
	A	W	A	W	A	W	A	W	A	W	A	W	A	W	A	W	
2012 – 2013	0	10	0	0	48	3	0	5	0	-1	0	2	0	4	0	0	71
2013 – 2014	0	2	0	4	32	0	0	14	26	1	0	4	0	0	0	2	85
2014 – 2015	0	31	0	0	0	2	0	5	7	6	0	4	0	0	0	1	56
2015 – 2016	0	0	0	14	0	21	0	4	0	9	0	25	0	1	0	40	114
2016 – 2017	0	50	0	13	0	-1	0	5	0	17	9	56	30	0	0	13	192
2017 - 2018	0	1	0	4	10	4	27	8	0	15	50	7	0	-1	0	0	125
2018 - 2019	0	6	9	1	0	6	23	15	0	19	32	1	77	16	0	0	205
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>848</b>

A = Allocation      W = Windfall

It is very apparent that the rate of windfall development otherwise as expressed within the AWTP, for Wickham settlement, has been virtually non-existent, with a total of three homes delivered across the period 2012-2019.

Section 14 of the PSLP sets out the strategy for Wickham settlement, acknowledging its role as a Larger Rural Settlement, and a sustainable location for growth. The housing delivery approach for Wickham comprises two allocations for a total of 100 homes; comprising: *Site WI02 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham* and *Site WI03 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road*, and alongside this a windfall allowance of 50 homes. It is clear from the historic pattern of delivery within Wickham settlement that the housing delivery which has occurred has been as a result of strategic site allocations; WK2 - Land north of Winchester Road, and WK3 – Glebe Housing Allocation and open space; indeed this is reflected by the 'Net Completions' and 'Outstanding Permissions' as cited within the table provided in excerpt below.

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Table 1. Wickham Housing Sources – Proposed Submission Local Plan (2024)

Wickham Housing Sources	No. of dwellings
Net Completions in or adjoining settlement (2020 - 2023)	118
Outstanding permissions (at 2023) including Local Plan allocations carried forward (Policies WK1, WK2)	88
Windfall allowance	50
New Sites allocated in this Plan (Policies WK5, WK6)	100
<b>Total Provision 2020 – 2040</b>	<b>356</b>

There is no clear evidence that the windfall allowance of 50 homes, which has been allocated to Wickham, will be capable of being delivered having regard for the extant settlement boundary constraints and absence of available brownfield or previously developed sites that could become available during the plan period.

The Winchester City Council Brownfield Land Register (2023) ('BLR') contains no sites at all within Wickham settlement or parish. There are no such opportunities and thus any windfall development could only come forwards by way of plot severance or by way of planning by appeal should the Council not meet its housing needs. This is not indicative of a proactive approach to meeting the housing needs of the plan area.

Indeed, the fact that 33% (50 homes) of the housing delivery proposed for Wickham within this plan period is proposed to be delivered through windfall when otherwise all 206 homes comprised within the net completions, and outstanding permissions have been delivered on strategic sites WK2 and WK3 following the adoption of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 (2017).

There are however a number of opportunities, including *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham (WI24)* which are available and deliverable within the plan period, which should have been formally allocated instead of leaving to uncertainty the delivery of housing required to meet the objectively assessed needs of the district during the plan period.

Having regard for historic patterns of delivery, at Wickham, it is clear that housing delivery is best planned through the formal allocation of sites and that the scope for meaningful windfall development is limited.

As a baseline analysis therefore, the Council's strategy places an unnecessary reliance on windfall sites to meet the provision of at least 15,465 homes across the plan period. The Local Plan does not plan proactively for the delivery of 15,465 homes at all, it plans for approximately 13,570 homes, with the remainder expected to come forwards in a manner that is not positively planned for and offers no guarantee at all of strategic needs for housing being met.

The imposition of a windfall allowance is not in of itself unreasonable, but where there is no reasonable requirement for such a windfall allowance to be included, due to the availability of suitable sites, the Council's approach in this respect is rightly questioned. The Council have not, alongside the imposition of windfall allowances for settlements

such as Wickham, considered how or where these sites might come forwards. Indeed, there are simply not the opportunities for that number of dwellings to reasonably come forwards through urban intensification as a result of the tightly drawn settlement boundary and absence of meaningful sized parcels of undeveloped land. It is unrealistic to expect such a level of delivery through patterns of plot severance, which themselves may not respect local character in any event and will certainly not represent good quality design and place making.

It should not be forgotten that, at the time the PSLP is intended to be submitted for examination it will be planning for less than a 15 year plan period, and thus consideration should be given to an increase in housing numbers in any event to properly meet the objectively assessed housing needs and other priorities of the district over an appropriate plan horizon.

This is not a positive vision for the Winchester Council Plan Area. It is a strategy founded in a reasonable degree of uncertainty where reliance upon windfall development accounts for a total of approximately an eighth (12.3%) of the suggested 15,465 homes.

This is in our view inappropriate and runs contrary to the intentions of the NPPF whereby the needs of the plan area should be provided for in order to deliver certainty of housing needs being met. It is important to recognise that the 'housing need' of the plan area as defined by the standard method is not a maximum, but rather a starting point and the Council should be planning to meet local housing needs as a minimum. To therefore rely on windfall development to address this need is not in our view appropriate given the availability of other sites that are capable of being brought forwards to ensure these needs are fully met within the plan period.

The Council's approach does not provide a positive vision for the future of the Plan Area, contrary to Paragraph 15 of the NPPF, however this can be made sound through the allocation of additional sites to ensure that the objectively assessed housing need will be met in full.

The proposed spatial strategy for meeting housing needs is not appropriately aspirational in this regard. It does not properly consider opportunities to deliver meaningful levels of growth which will meet the objectively assessed need with the proposed reliance upon windfall development, and with respect to Wickham settlement, does not demonstrate proper consideration having been given to the detailed consultation and engagement undertaken by Wickham and Knowle Parish Council in relation to the opportunities for strategic development at Wickham settlement. The Council has in this regard dismissed the positive and effective engagement undertaken by the Parish Council with parishioners and other members of the public, who have made clear their preferred approach for the growth of Wickham, fundamentally comprising the support for the delivery of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* in preference to the other strategic development opportunities.

Paragraph 16 of the NPPF does not require that Councils simply engage with local communities, organisations and statutory consultees, but it requires specifically that



*'plans should... be shaped by early proportionate and effective engagement'*. The expectation is one of more than simply giving the opportunity to make representation, but rather that local communities should have the opportunity to actually shape the future of their local area.

At the Regulation 18 Draft Winchester District Local Plan consultation stage, a number of developer, stakeholder and other responses were made to the Council which stated that the development potential of Wickham, alongside the lower order settlement Sutton Scotney, should be reconsidered, and that it was inappropriate to rely upon windfall development alone for these settlements as the Council had previously intended to do, in a manner which was inconsistent; in respect of Wickham, with the other Larger Rural Settlements within the Council's settlement hierarchy.

Winchester Council subsequently reviewed the suitability of proposing allocations at both Wickham and Sutton Scotney and this is reflected within the PSLP. Notwithstanding this however, the Council have not appropriately had regard for the detailed consultation which was undertaken by Wickham and Knowle Parish Council, following the request of Winchester City Council, in order to determine the preferred approach of the Parish Council and local residents for the future sustainable growth of Wickham.

This is fundamentally opposed to the approach which has been taken for Sutton Scotney, whereby, despite comprising a lower order Intermediate Rural Settlement, the Council have produced an Evidence Base document titled 'Sutton Scotney Site Selection Information August 2024', which discusses the engagement had with Wonston Parish Council and the local ward members in relation to the site opportunities regarding the future development of the settlement and evidences the decision making process in selecting the proposed strategic site, *Land at Brightlands (WO10)*, to meet the housing needs of the settlement. Whether this comprises an appropriate site for identification will be a matter for the Inspector and interested parties at examination, but fundamentally there has been an inconsistency in the approach taken for Wickham settlement, which itself sits higher in the settlement hierarchy and has a greater expectation in terms of housing delivery, which is simply not justified.

Wickham and Knowle Parish Council undertook a call for sites exercise, whereby a range of potential strategic development sites were put forwards for consideration. Indeed, many of these sites are reflected within the SHELAA and comprise the land on the periphery of Wickham settlement. In March 2022, the Parish Council narrowed down the list of site opportunities to a shortlist of five potential development sites.

A drop in event was arranged by the Parish Council on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 for local residents to review the five remaining potential development sites that had been put forwards by landowners and developers. Alongside this a survey was undertaken and its results reported to the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022 Parish Council meeting.

Prior to the May 2022 drop in event and survey, the Parish Council made clear that their preferred site was *'Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham' Site ref. WI24*. The consultation exercise was held on the premise that validation was being sought for

the selection of this site as the preferred option. The rationale for the Parish Council's selection of this site was held to be on grounds of:

- Part of the site comprising previously developed land; comprising redundant buildings;
- That the development of the site would maintain the compact form of the village and prevent extension of the settlement out into the countryside;
- That the site offered significant potential opportunities for public open space and a connected network of greenspaces which would sit alongside the Welborne Garden Village and provide the opportunity of delivering a continuous walking connection to Knowle to the south;
- That opportunities existed for biodiversity enhancement and new habitat creation on a large scale; and,
- That the allocation and development of the site would allow the open gap between Wickham and the Welborne Garden Village to be maintained permanently open by formally designating the land as part of a network of green spaces, forming essentially a country park style designation.

There was a very clear rationale for the Parish Council's identification of '*Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*' as their preferred site. The site comprises the last piece of the puzzle alongside the Welborne SANG to form in essence a country park style area of around 100ha between this site, Welborne Garden Village and the proposed allocation at Ravenswood, Knowle. This would comprise a protected greenspace capable of being preserved as open in perpetuity and maintaining the 'open gap' between Wickham and the new settlement at Welborne.

The direction from Wickham and Knowle Parish Council in this regard was clear, however the Council dismissed the views of locals and instead of supporting their preferred approach, has taken the decision to allocate two alternative sites on the northern and eastern peripheries of the settlement, extending the village out into the landscape.

We consider that this decision was unjustified and is inconsistent with the clear direction of Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the NPPF, which makes clear that opportunities for local people to shape their surroundings are fundamental to the plan making process. We discuss the rationale behind selection of these sites, and why we consider '*Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham; WI24*' should have been considered more favourably and ultimately selected later within this representation.

Notwithstanding the above, there is no clear evidence, having regard for past rates of windfall development, and considering the defined development boundary at Wickham settlement, that the windfall housing allowance of 50 homes will be deliverable. The same consideration applies to the other Larger Rural Settlements as defined within the Council's settlement hierarchy; however, we have not undertaken a detailed analysis of those settlements at this time. The focus of our representation is with respect of Wickham settlement.

Without evidence of clear deliverability of the windfall allocation for Wickham, and having regard for the dismissal of the early positive engagement of the Parish Council with the plan making process in an attempt to properly shape the future of their local area, there are fundamental questions regarding the soundness of the approach and consistency with Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Framework.

### Summary

On the basis that the Winchester District PSLP is currently drafted, we do not consider that it satisfies the requirements of Sections 19 and 24(1) of the PCPA 2004; in that it has not had appropriate regard for the direction of National Policy as:

- i. It does not plan to meet the overall need for development within the Plan Area in a manner that provides certainty or is deliverable;
- ii. It does not demonstrate that the plan strategy has been appropriately shaped by proportionate and effective engagement with local communities and statutory consultees in respect of the approach to Wickham settlement;
- iii. There is clear inconsistency demonstrated in relation to the approach taken for the settlements of Wickham and Sutton Scotney regarding the late introduction of development sites for these settlements post Regulation 18 consultation stage, and how the assessment and identification of sites has been carried out and evidenced;
- iv. It does not demonstrate that the need planned for could or would be delivered within the Plan Period, planning for at least the next 15 years, because it relies unnecessarily upon windfall development to deliver approximately 12% of the overarching need;
- v. It is questionable whether it provides a clear strategy for bringing forward sufficient land, at a sufficient rate to meet objectively assessed needs and thus stands directly contrary to the presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- vi. The plan period should be extended to 2041 to ensure that, by the time the Local Plan is adopted, it plans appropriately for a 15-year plan horizon.

The Winchester District PSLP is not in strict accordance with National Policy as prepared, however, we do consider that subject to appropriate main modifications the plan is capable of being made sound. We would ask the Council to engage with us and Wickham and Knowle Parish Council in relation to the concerns raised with the soundness of the approach, particularly pertaining to Wickham settlement, and request that the EIP Inspector introduce a specific hearing session and invite further evidence on this ground.

### ***(2) Is the Proposed Submission Local Plan Procedurally Compliant?***

Clear procedural guidance is provided by the Secretary of State in respect of the preparation of Local Development Plan Documents and it is not necessary to go through the substance of the guidance in full, however comment is made in respect of specific aspects of the procedure as set out below.

With reference to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Section 18(3) requires that *'in preparing a Local Plan, the Local Planning Authority must take in to account any representation made to them'*.

The Council will be well aware that detailed representations were made by numerous interested parties at the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation stage. Whilst the general response to the vision of the plan was entirely split down the middle with an equal number of respondents generally supportive and otherwise objecting to the proposals, the response to the proposed spatial strategy was one which saw a majority of respondent parties objecting. The fundamental concerns were in relation to the unequal distribution of development which was proposed, with some larger rural settlements missing out entirely on the need to deliver any growth and this instead being disproportionately allocated to other areas. Fundamentally the approach respondents sought was one where development was equally distributed between settlements of the same tier in the settlement hierarchy, to ensure that an appropriate level of growth would occur at all settlements to meet the future needs of residents and to address patterns of in migration.

In particular specific representations were made in relation to the allocation of land at Wickham, which at the Regulation 18 stage saw no formal land allocations despite its categorisation as a larger rural settlement within the settlement hierarchy and thus a sustainable location for the delivery of growth.

The need to identify and formally allocated land at Wickham settlement has been in part addressed by the Council at Regulation 19 stage, however fundamentally the PSLP ignores the clear expressed wishes of the local community and Wickham and Knowle Parish Council in terms of those sites which have been selected.

The details of the Parish Council's consultation exercise and engagement with both the public and Winchester Council have been set out. There was a clear opportunity for Winchester Council to take appropriate account of this local voice and desire to share the future of their community; however, the Council instead took the decision to allocate alternative sites which were not supported. The responses of consultees have not reasonably or rationally been taken into account. Subsequently the Parish Council have voted to support the allocation of Mayles Farm over the two current proposed allocations.

We do not consider that the Council has fulfilled its obligation to properly take into account those representations made to it at the Regulation 18 Consultation Stage, and indeed subsequently through the detailed engagement undertaken by Wickham and Knowle Parish Council regarding the future development options for Wickham settlement, and subsequently the overarching spatial strategy and direction of the plan. The Council is entitled to disagree with comments raised as part of its Regulation 18 or Regulation 19 consultation stages, but its decision making in doing so must be rational and reasonable with the purpose of providing an alternative means and evidence that the overarching objective of the strategic priorities and objectively assessed local needs will be achieved.

We consider in this respect that the Local Plan is contrary to Section 18(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and in turn Sections 17(7) and 36 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and this particular test of legal compliance has not been met. We however consider that the plan can be made appropriately sound in this regard through main modifications and the inclusion of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* as a strategic allocation.

**(3) Is the Draft Local Plan Sound?**

Soundness is a matter for the Examining Inspector, with no strict definition as set out in law. However, the NPPF provides some direction at Paragraph 35 that a plan will be 'sound' if it is:

- a. Positively prepared - providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b. Justified – comprising an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternative and based on proportionate evidence;
- c. Effective – deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic matters, rather than deferring these, as a Statement of Common Ground should demonstrate;
- d. Consistent with National Policy – in that it enables the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the Framework and other national policy statements.

The following sections deal with the matters a-d collectively given the degree of crossover.

Compliance with Paragraph 35 of the NPPF

We contend that the Winchester District PSLP, as drafted, is not 'positively prepared' and does not seek to meet objectively assessed development needs in full in a manner which provides certainty, in an unambiguous manner, how these will be met on realistic and deliverable sites.

We also contend that the strategy as set out is not 'justified' on the basis of the Council's evidence base clearly substantiating other reasonable alternatives that could and should have reasonably been explored, and moreover, following the tests of reasonableness as established by the courts as the '*Reasonable Person Test*', an alternative conclusion could and should have been reached in respect of the strategy for Wickham settlement.

We do consider broadly that the PSLP provides an effective strategy that demonstrates that the Planning Authority's priorities will be met over the plan period and indeed they demonstrate that effective engagement on a cross boundary basis with other neighbouring Local Planning Authorities has occurred.

We finally do not consider, as is discussed in detail further above, that the Council's approach as set out within the PSLP is in accordance with the NPPF in that it does not

comprise sustainable development or properly plan for housing needs to be met in a manner which has enabled the spatial strategy to be appropriately shaped through engagement with local communities and statutory consultees.

With respect to Wickham settlement, there is a clear opportunity to bring forward a meaningful pattern of development at *Land at Mayles Farm (WI24)* which offers clear connectivity opportunities with the other strategic patterns of housing development proposed at Ravenswood, Knowle and indeed to dovetail appropriately with Welborne Garden Village and provide a highly connected townscape and landscape for local residents to enjoy.

*Land at Mayles Farm (WI24)* is the only site that offers this opportunity, it is the missing piece of the puzzle to deliver a cohesive country park style landscape between the settlement areas, which would remain permanently open and preserve the character of the open gap between the settlements.

The Council at present propose that the site forms part of the 'Welborne Open Space' a significant swathe of land of approximately 201 hectares in area. The Council consider that, despite none of the housing development within the Welborne Garden Village being located within Winchester District, the PSLP should provide a green buffer to ensure that Welborne does not coalesce with Wickham or Knowle. The Council is seeking to define this as an open gap, and suggests that some natural green infrastructure could be located on the land falling within Winchester District, however it has no means of seeing that this land is brought forwards for such purposes.

There is no incentive for landowners to make their land available for open greenspace and indeed there is no realistic prospect that any such proposals would come forwards in isolation from an appropriate quantum of housing development in order to justify the land being released and made available to the public.

Our client as landowner of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, comprising a significant area of the proposed 'Welborne Open Space', sees no incentive to bring this forwards on the basis that is set out and the land will remain inaccessible to the public and providing no natural infrastructure benefit.

The most appropriate way of securing a significant quantum of this land as open space, would be to formally allocate part of the land for development, to round off the southern edge of Wickham settlement, and to allow the remainder of the pastureland to be brought forwards formally as public open greenspace which would form a cohesive network with the Welborne Garden Village and the Ravenswood development at Knowle. This would provide connectivity which is otherwise incapable of coming forwards, and the formal allocation of part of the land within a 'Welborne Open Space' allocation which is actually deliverable and can be transferred into public ownership would deliver substantial public benefits.

The PSLP strategy has not given appropriate consideration to this opportunity. On the contrary, the Parish Council, through the detailed engagement had with the general public, undertaken alongside the preparation of the PSLP, made clear that they saw

the clear potential of the development of *Land at Mayles Farm (WI24)*, and the high quality sense of place this would create for future residents, delivering upon the strategic needs for housing growth and at the same time securing in perpetuity the separation between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village through a formalised and protected 'green gap' which would be held in public ownership.

We do not consider that Winchester City Council have attributed sufficient weight to the impacts of the development of the two housing allocations selected for Wickham;

- *Site WI02 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham; and,*
- *Site WI03 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road.*

*Site WI02 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham*

Land at Mill Lane, Wickham (WI02) would see Wickham settlement sprawl northwards outside of and beyond the current firm development boundary that is formed by the transition from the existing pattern of development at Houghton Way and the pastoral pattern of fields beyond. The site would be accessed from Mill Lane, which itself transitions in terms of its character and there is a very clear shift from what reasonably forms part of Wickham settlement to land which very much forms part of its rural agricultural context with little urbanising influence.

The character of Mill Lane leaving the settlement changes. There are urbanising influences to the south comprised within the existing settlement boundary, but on approach to Site WI02, approximately 100m to the south, the character of the lane changes to a rural country lane with a strong degree of enclosure and absence of urbanising features. The enclosure provided by the tree line on both sides of the lane and native hedgerows provide a wholly rural character. On reaching the edge of site WI02, the character is firmly one of the countryside. There are no urban influences looking northwards and the context is solely of pastoral agricultural fields and mature trees and hedgerows as strong landscape features.

The existing settlement edge is comprised of an existing mature hedgerow screen with juvenile hedgerow trees. This will become more robust over time, but it is evident that, when looking north, the land is intrinsically rural, and that new development would significantly and materially change its character.

There are significant concerns with the impact of development on the character and function of Mill Lane, this is a low category road which is narrow and rural in its nature with hedgerow boundaries and poor sight lines. This emphasizes the rural setting of the site.

There are currently no public rights of way across the land and the site has no clear connectivity in this respect. It is also noted that Mill Lane has a history of flooding due to poor drainage issues and indeed, this could be exacerbated by the proposed development.

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*Excerpt – Housing Allocations – Mill Lane – Winchester District PSLP (2024)***Site Plan****Wider context**

In landscape terms, the land rises northward, with the landscape to the north of the village making a significant contribution to the distinctive character and rural setting of the village. It is considered likely to be valued for its intrinsic countryside character, beauty and tranquillity.

The boundary of the South Downs National Park lies approximately 100m to the north. The Council consider there is scope to mitigate the impact through careful siting and design, where development could be accommodated without changing landscape character through concentrating development to the south and SW corner of the site, maintaining a buffer to the protected woodland to the west of the site and locating open space on the more elevated parts of the site. However, the diminishment of this gap places additional pressure upon the South Downs National Park without good justification. There is no reasonable requirement for Wickham settlement to expand in this direction and diminish the gap to the National Park designation. The Council has given insufficient weight to the pressure upon the National Park in this regard and the consistency of the local landscape character with that of the projected designation.

The character of the landscape is entirely consistent with that entering the South Downs National Park Designation and thus this land forms intrinsically part of its setting. There is no fundamental change in the landscape which indicates that the site should be released. The pastoral pattern of fields, with ribbons of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and clusters of woodland is entirely consistent with this character.

It is clear that the designation of this site for development will clearly extend Wickham far beyond any of the previous patterns of development at the northern edge of the settlement, and will appear as a finger of growth pushing out into the landscape. There are clear reasons why the extension of Wickham settlement northwards is unjustified



and the Council's decision to allocate the site for development in preference to *Land at Mayles Farm (WI24)* is in our view unfounded.

**Site WI03 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road**

The designation of at Southwick Road/School Road (WI03) for housing development would see Wickham settlement sprawl eastwards; substantially beyond the existing extent of the settlement.

The Council describe this site as surrounded by residential land uses to the south, and agriculture to the north, east and west; however this is factually incorrect. There is residential development to the east and west however there are agricultural uses to the north and south. The site is positioned alongside the recent strategic housing allocation WK3 – Glebe Housing Allocation and open space, which was designated within the Winchester Local Plan Part 2 (2017).

*Excerpt – Housing Allocations – Southwick Road./School Road – Winchester District PSLP (2024)*

**Site Plan**



**Wider context**



It is abundantly clear in reading the proposed strategic site from an aerial perspective, that the site will fundamentally project out into the landscape as a finger of development, which does not relate to the existing settlement boundary of Wickham.

The Council consider the site to not be prominent from public viewpoints and well concealed within the wider landscape due to topography and trees, however, fundamentally, the designation of the site will extend the sprawl of the settlement eastwards out into an unrestricted open pastoral landscape with no nearby built context to relate to. The designation of this site could lead to further unrestricted sprawl and is contrary to the nucleated settlement pattern of Wickham, pushing development further away from services and facilities in the core of the settlement.

The neighbouring site at The Glebe (WK3) contained significant archaeological remains. There is no evidence to demonstrate that this site is also not subject to significant archaeological interest and indeed it is unclear what constraints this may impose on its ability to be brought forwards for housing development in a manner which would not push development to the periphery of the site where it would be preferable to located open space to ensure a soft edge is preserved to Wickham.

There is little rationale again to push development out into the pastoral landscape where there are no advantages for local connectivity or the delivery of significant public infrastructure to mitigate for the sprawl of the urban area.

Once again, it is clear that the designation of this site for development will clearly extend Wickham far beyond the previous patterns of development at the eastern edge of the settlement, and will appear as a finger of growth pushing out into the landscape. There are clear reasons why the extension of Wickham settlement further eastwards is unjustified and the Council's decision to allocate the site for development in preference to *Land at Mayles Farm (WI24)* is also in our view unfounded.

Both of these sites will see the existing settlement of Wickham sprawl out into the open countryside, and indeed will deliver sites which for distinct reasons are considered to be fundamentally less suitable than *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham (WI24)*.

### Summary

The Winchester District PSLP is not at present positively prepared on grounds that it does not seek to plan for its objectively assessed needs in full, but rather leaves to chance the delivery of 'windfall development' in settlements including Wickham, which have very limited, if any realistic opportunities which could come forwards in the plan period to deliver the quantum of homes suggested (50 homes). We do not consider this approach to be appropriately justified, and the proposed strategy will not be effective in meeting its objectively assessed needs. The Council has appropriate opportunities before it to allocate additional development to provide certainty in a manner which is unambiguous for the general public about how and where housing will be delivered.

The PSLP also does not demonstrate clearly that appropriate regard has been had for the direction of the Framework to ensure that local people have the chance to shape the future of their area, and indeed Wickham and Knowle Parish Council have appropriately sought to engage with the process in undertaking public consultation and seeking the opinion of local persons on where they consider Wickham settlement should be seeing growth and where opportunities exist to deliver a highly sustainable and connected community for the future.

The Parish Council have been clear that their preferred site is *Land at Mayles Lane, Wickham (WI24)* and indeed have engaged with Winchester Council to seek appropriate changes to the PSLP to reflect this. There is clear justification for the Parish Council's approach, and the Council have offered no clear rationale why the site should not be progressed. Indeed, the delivery of *Land at Mayles Farm (WI24)* would enable the Council to formally secure as publicly available green space a large swathe of land

within the intended 'Welborne Open Space' open gap between the settlements of Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village and thus prevent their coalescence in perpetuity.

We consider that the PSLP as drafted does fail some elements of the basic tests of soundness as set out at Paragraph 35 of the NPPF. We do however consider that this is a matter that can be appropriately rectified either pre-submission, or following submission to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Examination in Public. We ask the Inspector, if the PSLP is submitted in its current form for Examination in Public (EIP), to invite the Council to review the proposed strategy for Wickham settlement having regard for the detailed submissions of Wickham and Knowle Parish Council, and the representations herein made in respect of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*.

#### **(4) Does the Local Plan Comply with the Duty to Co-operate**

The Duty to Co-operate was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 with the intention that this would fulfil the aims of cross-boundary engagement and working between Local Planning Authorities which was originally intended to take place in the form of Regional Spatial Strategies that were abolished. Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out clearly the Duty to Co-operate and the obligation for authorities to demonstrate that they have complied with its intentions.

Amongst other things, the Duty to Co-operate requires that Councils preparing Local Development Plan documents '**engage constructively**', '**on an ongoing basis**', on the '**sustainable development or use of land**', where this would have a significant impact on at least two adjoining Local Planning Authority areas.

The requirement to demonstrate 'constructive engagement' may reasonably include or present itself through 'agreements on joint approaches' or 'joint development plan documents', or equally it may be an evidenced and justified common statement that no such collaborative working has been deemed achievable.

It is important to note that the 'Duty to Co-operate' (DTC) ceases once the Local Plan Examination has begun, so if the Council has not fulfilled the duty prior to the submission of the plan, it would not be reasonable for this to occur retrospectively during the course of the local plan examination.

This is a legal duty and not simply a requirement of policy. Failing to fulfil the DTC is sufficient to demonstrate that the plan itself is unsound. The Courts have held that Inspectors have no discretion to proceed with examining a plan where there is a failure of the DTC, and this cannot be rectified by further work post submission or an early review.

The relevant requirement is for an active and ongoing process of co-operation between the authorities. There is not a duty to agree, but there must be clear evidence of engagement and an attempt to co-operate in respect of issues such as the delivery of housing and infrastructure. As a baseline therefore Winchester Council should be able to demonstrate that an attempt has been made to engage with all neighbouring

authorities with which a common Plan Area boundary is held in order to fulfil the DTC legal requirement.

With respect to the DTC, Winchester Council have produced a Statement of Compliance (Evidence Base Document 'Duty to Co-operate') ('SoC') which stands alongside signed Statements of Common Ground ('SoCG') prepared jointly with neighbouring planning authorities.

The SoC confirms the relatively unique position of Winchester City Council, surrounded by seven adjoining local planning authorities; which share at least part of its plan area border.

Winchester City Council also shares an overlapping border with the South Downs National Park Authority, with planning responsibilities shared in respect of land falling within the National Park. The impact of development upon the National park requires careful consideration, but moreover, given the general approach to housing delivery within National Park Authorities being one of constraint, it is important that due consideration of the needs of the communities within the National Park are appropriately considered, and where necessary, that authorities such as Winchester City Council seek to contribute towards meeting needs on less sensitive land outside of the National Park designation where appropriate.

The group of authorities comprised of Winchester City Council and its neighbours, are covered by a co-operative partnership within the South Hampshire housing market area; known as the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH). There is a significant emphasis placed upon authorities within the partnership area to work collaboratively to meet broader housing needs that cannot be sustainably met within the individual authority areas. In this context the Council has allowed for an uplift on its housing needs to address a level of unmet need from neighbouring authorities, amounting to a total of 1,900 homes.

We consider the imposition of this uplift to be appropriate on the basis of the SoCG which have been entered into with neighbouring authorities, and that this comprises an appropriately forward thinking approach which properly reflects the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate. However, the Council have taken the decision, as Paragraph 4.54 of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) confirms, not to identify or allocate specific sites to meet this need. The Council direct that the additional housing is included as an 'overall buffer' applied to its housing need.

Whilst the Council has not identified specific sites to meet the unmet needs of other authority areas, it has proposed to allocate sufficient sites across the district as a whole to meet the overarching need of 15,465 homes. This is an appropriate stance in principal, however it should be noted that the unmet needs of other neighbouring authorities, would be best met in a reasonable proximity of those authorities where the need is located to ensure that it is actually addressing that specific need, and not simply a broader unaccounted need for housing growth.

The Council confirm that it is the 'southern parishes' which fall within the PfSH area, comprising the settlements of:

- Bishops Waltham;
- Colden Common;
- Denmead;
- Wickham;
- Swanmore; and,
- Waltham Chase.

It is claimed that around 50% of the 1,900 homes, unmet housing need, is to be met within these settlements, with the rest of the need spread across the district as a whole. We would invite the Inspector to consider whether this is a reasonable stance having regard for the location of the housing need and whether it is realistic for this need to be met in the more northerly parts of the plan area, which bear no relation with those areas from which the unmet need actually arises.

We consider that a more sound approach to the meeting of unmet needs by the Winchester Local Plan would be through the allocation of sufficient sites within the PfSH to directly address this need. We invite the Inspector to consider whether additional sites should be allocated within the 'southern parishes' on this basis, and once again emphasise the availability of *'Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham'* to meet this need.

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**Winchester City Council  
Pre-Submission Local Plan  
Regulation 19 Consultation**

**OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED HOUSING NEED**

## **Objectively Assessed Housing Need**

### **(1) The National Policy Background**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expects strategic plan making authorities to follow the Standard Method for calculating housing need within their area.

As Paragraph 60 of the NPPF confirms, 'it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forwards where it is needed and the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed'. 'The overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible'.

At Paragraph 61 the NPPF directs that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a Local Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), conducted using the Standard Method set out within Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF confirms that *'the outcome of the standard method is an advisory starting point for establishing a housing requirement for the area'*. It is accepted that there may be exceptional circumstances, *'including relating to the particular demographics of the area, which justify an alternative approach to assessing housing need'*. The circumstances as the NPPF confirms however will be 'exceptional' and indeed this will not be the case for the majority of Local Authorities by virtue of this.

A common sense approach must be applied to the consideration of the word 'exceptional circumstances' and indeed it is necessary that this is out of the ordinary, unusual, special or uncommon. To be exceptional it is not necessary that the circumstances are unique or unprecedented, but they cannot be regularly, routinely, or normally encountered and indeed therefore for the Council to justify that there is a need to depart from the Standard method, there should be clear and convincing justification that steps beyond the identification of normal constraints that could equally be said to apply to many other Local Planning Authorities.

Paragraph 67 of the NPPF requires that LPAs establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (including any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. The requirement may itself be higher than the identified housing need, per the Standard Method, if it includes provision for neighbouring area or reflects growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment. Indeed, the Standard Method is the starting point, and it is appropriate to consider whether there is a reasonable requirement for an uplift to take account of local circumstances, including the need to address the requirements of specific sections of the community or for example affordable housing need.

The NPPF at Paragraph 69 obligates that strategic plan making authorities have a clear understanding of the land available within their area through the preparation of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). From this, a sufficient supply and mix of sites should be identified, taking into account the availability, suitability

and viability of the land for development. Specifically, LPAs are required to identify a supply of:

- a. specific, deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption; and
- b. specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for the subsequent years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the remaining plan period.

Paragraph 70 recognises that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area due to their ability to be built out relatively quickly. Support is given by the NPPF to the identification through the development plan of at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than 1ha in area, unless there are strong reasons why this cannot be achieved.

Paragraph 72 of the NPPF confirms that where an allowance is made for windfall development as part of the housing land supply, there should be compelling evidence that this will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard for the SHLAA, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.

Paragraph 74 of the NPPF reinforces that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often best be achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

At Paragraph 75 the NPPF requires that strategic policies include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery across the plan period.

Paragraph 76 of the NPPF enables LPAs to demonstrate that they have identified a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing through its examination at the plan making stage. It is for the Council to demonstrate that the sites identified are realistic and deliverable in accordance with the definition set out at Pages 69 of 'Annex:2 – Glossary' to the NPPF, as set out below:

**Deliverable:** To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:

- a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).
- b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.



Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) confirms at Paragraph 002 Reference ID: 2a-002-20190220;

- The National Planning Policy Framework expects strategic policy-making authorities to follow the standard method in this guidance for assessing local housing need.
- The standard method uses a formula to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for, in a way which addresses projected household growth and historic under-supply.
- The standard method identifies a minimum annual housing need figure. It does not produce a housing requirement figure.

At Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 2a-003-20190220, the PPG confirms that the use of the Standard Method for strategic plan making purposes is not mandatory; however, if it is felt that circumstances warrant an alternative approach authorities can expect this to be scrutinised more closely at examination. There is an expectation that the standard method will be used, and that any other method will be used only in exceptional circumstances.

Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20201216 of the PPG defines the Standard Method and how the calculation should be undertaken. It is not necessary to repeat those details here in full.

Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 2a-005-20190220 of the PPG directs that the 2014-based household projections are used within the standard method to provide stability for planning authorities and communities, ensure that historic under-delivery and declining affordability are reflected, and to be consistent with the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. There is indeed no justification for the use of projections from any other base date.

Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 2a-006-20190220 confirms that the Standard Method for assessing local housing need incorporates an affordability adjustment in order to respond to price signals and maintain consistency with the national policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes as reflected within the NPPF. The specific adjustment is set at a level to ensure that minimum annual housing need starts to address the affordability of homes.

Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 2a-007-20190220 of the PPG recognises that the Standard Method may identify a minimum local housing need figure that is significantly higher than the number of homes currently being planned for and as a result it incorporates a 'cap'. The cap is applied to help ensure that the minimum local housing need figure calculated using the standard method is as deliverable as possible.

The cap reduces the minimum number generated by the standard method, but does not reduce the overall housing need itself. Therefore, the PPG is clear that strategic policies adopted with a cap applied may require an early review and updating to ensure that any housing need above the capped level is planned for as soon as is reasonably possible. Where the minimum annual local housing need figure is subject to a cap,

consideration can still be given to whether a higher level of need could realistically be delivered.

Paragraph 015 Reference ID: 2a-015-20190220, sets out how methods alternative to the use of the Standard method will be considered at the Examination in Public stage. The PPG states that Local Planning Authorities may only use alternative methods for assessing housing need in exceptional circumstances.

The PPG advises that *'where an alternative approach results in a lower housing need figure than that identified using the standard method, the strategic policy-making authority will need to demonstrate, using robust evidence, that the figure is based on realistic assumptions of demographic growth and that there are exceptional local circumstances that justify deviating from the standard method'*.

It is also confirmed that the Council's assumptions *'will be tested at examination'*.

It is only therefore where there are both exceptional circumstances and indeed robust evidence can be provided that evidence these exceptional circumstances and why the alternative method for calculating need provides realistic assumptions of demographic growth, that a deviation from the standard method can be justified.

## **(2) Winchester City Council Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)**

With respect to Winchester City Council's approach to carrying out a Local Housing Needs Assessment, the Council has decided to follow the Standard Method for calculating housing need.

The Council has not taken the decision therefore to seek to demonstrate 'exceptional circumstances' exist which justify the use of an alternative approach to calculating need, but rather to meet its housing need in full. It is in this context that the proposed housing numbers as set out within the plan should be considered and assessed.

Winchester City Council instructed the services of ICENI Projects Limited to prepare both an assessment of its Local Housing Need (LHN), and alongside this a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which considers the needs of particular groups of the population demographic and how this accords with the projections which form the baseline to the Standard Method for calculating housing need as defined by National Policy. The Council's Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is therefore set out within the following documents, which are listed under the Council's Examination Documents under the title 'Housing':

- Future Local Housing Need and Population Profile Assessment (January 2020) (LHN)
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Winchester District (February 2020) (SHMA 2020)
- Winchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update – Final Report (July 2024) (SHMA 2024)

On the basis of the baseline position set out within the LHN assessment, the Council considers its housing need to be calculated from the following baseline figures set out within Table 3.4; as cited below, and with reference to the affordability ratio from the March 2019 release of the Ratio of House Price to Workplace Based Earnings dataset by the Office for National Statistics (ONS); comprising a mean affordability ratio of 12.25. The assessment of housing need was originally calculated by the Council on the basis of a base year of 2019, and thus for the period 2019-2029. This was subsequently updated within the LHN assessment to a base year of 2021, to cover the period from 2021-2031.

*Table 3.4. Projected Household Growth in Winchester District 2021-2031 – Future Local Housing Need and Population Profile Assessment (2020)*

	<b>Winchester District</b>
<b>Households, 2021</b>	51,123
<b>Households, 2031</b>	55,502
<b>Household Growth, 2021-31</b>	4,379
<b>Annual Average Household Growth</b>	438

Source: MHCLG 2014-based Household Projections

Taking these figures and applying these to the standard method provides a housing need of 664 dwellings per annum as reflected within Table 3.5.

*Table 3.5. Local Housing Need for Winchester District 2021-2031 – Future Local Housing Need and Population Profile Assessment (2020)*

	<b>Winchester District</b>
<b>Annual Average Household Growth</b>	438
<b>Median workplace-based affordability ratio, 2018</b>	12.25
<b>Adjustment factor</b>	52%
<b>Local Housing Need, per annum</b>	664

Winchester City Council considered this to compromise its 'fixed' housing need figure, having regard for its original intention to submit the PSLP for examination in 2021. This did not however occur.

It is clear therefore that there is a need to re-base the housing need based on an up to date assessment with 2024 as the base date, and thus to consider the period from 2024-2034. On this basis, the following figures apply:

	<b>Winchester District</b>
<b>Households, 2024</b>	52,401
<b>Households, 2034</b>	56,696
<b>Household Growth, 2024-2034</b>	4295
<b>Annual Average Household Growth</b>	430 (429.5)

Taking the above baseline information, the following table provides a calculation of the up to date housing needs for Winchester City Council taking 2024 as the base year, which produces a housing need of 676 homes.

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**Winchester District**

<b>Annual Average Household Growth</b>	430
<b>Median Workplace-based Affordability Ratio (2023)</b>	13.19
<b>Adjustment Factor</b>	57.4%
<b>Local Housing Need, per annum</b>	676 (676.2)

The Council did not, at the time of updating its local housing need assessment in 2021, update the affordability ratio, which rose from the original 2018 figure used, from 12.25, to 13.84 for the 2021 base year.

At the current time, this affordability ratio as defined by the Ratio of House Price to Workplace Based Earnings dataset produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) stands at 13.19 for the 2023 base year, comprising the most up to date evidence.

The PSLP correctly cites at Paragraph 9.4 that the current Standard Method housing need for Winchester District stands at 676 dwellings per annum. The Council has used this as the baseline for its proposed housing delivery and thus we consider this an appropriate position.

Having regard for the proposed plan period 2020-2040, the Council has allowed for the housing needs within the initial four years of the plan period, using calculations from those respective base years to determine the housing need. In total, the housing needs of Winchester Council comprise 13,565 homes; as reflected within Table H1 of the PSLP, provided in excerpt below:

*Table H1. Standard Method Annual Need – Winchester PSLP (2024)*

<b>Years of Plan Period</b>	<b>Standard Method Need</b>	<b>x Number of Years</b>
2020-2021	685	685 x 1 = 685
2021-2022	666	666 x 1 = 666
2022-2023	707	707 x 1 = 707
2023-2024	691	691 x 1 = 691
2024-2040	676	676 x 16 = 10,816
<b>Total</b>		<b>13,565</b>

Whilst the PSLP reflects the up to date housing need figure, the Council's background assessment, which underpins the approach taken to the standard method should however be updated accordingly. At present this document is out of date and contributes little to the Evidence Base.

It should however be noted that, should the examination of the PSLP be protracted, consideration should be given to the extension of the plan period to 2020-2041, to ensure that the PSLP appropriately plans for a minimum of a 15 year plan period as National Policy requires.

### ***(3) Implications of the Emerging National Planning Policy Framework***

At the time of writing, the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (DNPPF) is undergoing public consultation, with the Government committed to a comprehensive review of the feedback provided by professionals, stakeholders and the general public.

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) made a series of announcements and released documentation , alongside the DNPPF on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

MHCLG have committed to updating the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to bring back *mandatory housing targets* and to increase the expectation of how many homes will be built through new increased housing targets.

The new housing targets are proposed to make sure that Local Authorities plan for a level of housing growth that is proportionate to the size of existing communities, but targeting specifically those areas where house prices are most out of step with local incomes through an uplift.

The Government are reinforcing the expectation for all Local Authorities to have an up to date Local Plan to properly plan for local housing needs. There is a commitment from the Government to 'step in' to push progress with Local Plans and to take 'tough decisions' where they need to be taken, however we do not at this stage have the detail of how this will work in practice and what the threshold will be for the Government to step in.

The Standard Method is proposed to be substantially revised, with the current methodology considered unfit for purpose and unable to properly plan for the level of housing growth which is required across the country.

The use of the Standard Method to determine housing targets will also be made *mandatory*, requiring local authorities to plan for their need. A lower figure can only be planned for where they can demonstrate hard constraints and that all options have been exhausted. There will be no opportunity to argue for exceptional circumstances.

The Duty to Cooperate is also to be reinforced; requiring that neighbouring authorities actually share needs and meet the housing needs of others if they cannot be met in their plan area. They will need to evidence again that all possible steps have been taken and exhausted to meet this need.

With respect to Winchester City Council the implications of the new Standard Method for calculating housing need are set out in the below table:

<b><i>Local Authority</i></b>	<b>Adopted Local Plan Figure</b>	<b>Current Standard Method Figure</b>	<b>Proposed Standard Method Figure</b>	<b>Percentage Increase (from Current SM)</b>
<i>Winchester CC</i>	625	676	1,099	63%

The Council are therefore anticipated to see a significant uplift on the housing needs for the district of approximately 63%; or a total increase of 423 homes per annum.

This comprises a clear step change in the level of housing delivery required within the plan area and one which will require a material change in the proposed spatial strategy to deliver upon.

At the time of writing the Government has put in place transitional arrangements to encourage Local Planning Authorities to continue work with existing Local Plans, where they are at a sufficiently advanced stage of preparation.

The transitional period proposed by the Government's includes an extension therefore of the current local plan making system until December 2026; with any plan prepared under the current system to have been submitted for examination no later than December 2026.

For Authorities that have reached Regulation 19 Consultation/Publication Stage, but their plan has yet to be submitted for examination at the point of 'one month following the release of the new DNPPF', the Local Plan can proceed to examination as long as the gap in the number of dwellings planned for by the Local Plan is not more than 200 dwellings per annum less than would need to be planned for under the new Standard Method calculation.

For plans which have not reached submission therefore, but which have planned for more than 200 homes per annum less than the new Standard Method proposes, these authorities will need to revise their plan in accordance with the new DNPPF.

The new Government have now written to PINS to push for Inspectors to make 'tough decisions' and focus their time on plans that are capable of being found sound to realise the Government's aim of 'universal plan coverage'.

Inspectors are being asked therefore to only be pragmatic where a plan is capable of being found sound with limited additional work. Any pauses in the examination should be no longer than six months overall and if there are fundamental issues with the soundness of the plan, these should be withdrawn or found unsound and put back to the Local Authority.

This approach applies with immediate effect to all plans within the system and upcoming examinations. Inspectors are instructed to act in good faith in respect of existing agreed pauses, unless insufficient progress is being made.

There is therefore a strong push for Local Authorities to get Local Plans in place and to meet the new housing requirements proposed by the new Standard Method, which means for almost all Local Authorities, the need to identify and release significant additional areas of land for housing growth and to plan for increased densities within their urban areas and in particular maximise the potential of Brownfield Sites, alongside release of appropriate Green Belt land with a focus on the Government's new Grey Belt classification.

We consider it is appropriate at this time for Winchester Council to be seeking to proceed with seeking the examination of its local plan. If, however, the plan remains to be submitted at the point of expiry of one month following the release of the DNNPF, the Council will be required to review its housing supply figures and identify additional sites.

This is clearly a careful balance in terms of timings, but the onus is that of the Local Authority to ensure that any Local Plan submitted for examination is appropriately in compliance with National Policy.

#### ***(4) Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)***

The Council prepared a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) (2021). This document was originally intended to underpin the PSLP in line with the intention to submit for examination in 2021. This is the only SHELAA document included within the Evidence Base to the Local Plan, however the Council has since updated the SHELAA to a base date of July 2023. The Council should include the 2023 SHELAA within its package of submission documents.

The Council have derived their chosen strategic site allocations from the 'Suitable and Available Residential Sites'.

Within the context of the overarching HELAA, the Council considers that there is a total 'Residential Land Availability to 2039' of 62,359 homes.

It is noted that the Council have not updated the base year discussed within the SHELAA, which should be appropriately updated. It is not anticipated that this will change materially the availability of sites, however.

The Council, through the various assessment stages of the SHELAA have considered the various land parcels and sites and worked through a process of exclusions to reach this overarching figure. Included within this supply, are both smaller and larger sites. The Council has only selected a small subset of these sites, deemed to be available, for allocation.

The SHELAA itself, whilst setting out a high level list of the sites and providing a list of sustainability criteria in accordance with the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), does not reach any clear conclusions on which sites are most suitable and should be taken forwards for allocation.

The Council's formal assessment of the sites is set out within the IIA at Appendix F.

#### ***(5) Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) and Development Strategy and Site Selection Topic Paper***

The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) comprises the detailed consideration of each of the potential strategic sites identified within the SHELAA. The sites have been

assessed and scored on the basis of a defined set out objectives and evaluation criteria.

The following sets out those criteria applied:

- IIA1 – to minimise the District’s contribution to climate change through a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from all sources and facilitate the aim of carbon neutrality by 2030
- IIA2 – to reduce the need to travel by private vehicle in the District and improve air quality
- IIA4 – to improve public health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in the District
- IIA7 – to ensure essential services and facilities and jobs in the District are accessible
- IIA8 – to support the sustainable growth of the District’s economy
- IIA9 – to support the District’s biodiversity and geodiversity
- IIA10 – to conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the District’s landscapes
- IIA11 – to conserve and enhance the District’s historic environment including its setting
- IIA12 – to support the efficient use of the District’s resources, including land and minerals
- IIA13 – to protect the quality and quantity of the District’s water resource
- IIA14 – to manage and reduce flood risk from all sources

With respect to *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* (Site Ref. WI24), the IIA reached the following conclusions.

*Excerpt – Integrated Impacts Assessment (IIA) – Appendix 2 – WI24 Mayles Farm, Wickham*

<b>IIA Objective</b>	<b>Score</b>
IIA1: climate change mitigation	Minor negative (-)
IIA2: travel and air quality	Minor negative (-)
IIA4: health and wellbeing	Minor positive (+)
IIA7: services and facilities	Minor negative (-)
IIA8: economy	Negligible uncertain (0?)
IIA9: biodiversity and geodiversity	Significant negative (--)
IIA10: landscape	Minor negative uncertain (-?)
IIA11: historic environment	Negligible uncertain (0?)
IIA12: natural resources	Significant negative (--)
IIA13: water resources	Negligible (0)
IIA14: flood risk	Negligible (0)

- IIA1
  - The Council consider that the site scored minor negative due to the site not being within reasonable proximity of a secondary school or railway station.



- This is the same conclusion reached for all sites within Wickham settlement, given that these services are not catered for within the settlement.
- In this respect the site is just as suitable for allocation as the selected strategic allocations for Wickham.
- IIA2
  - As with IIA1, the site is appropriately close to services and facilities such that there will be no significant bearing upon the need to use a private vehicle to access most day to day facilities.
  - Other services facilities which are not present within Wickham will require use of a private vehicle, which is the same for any site at Wickham settlement.
- IIA4
  - The site is not located within an area subject to a high background noise environment and is located in an appropriate proximity of health services and facilities and access to public open space.
  - Insufficient weight has been given to the significant public open space opportunities and sports provision that would be delivered by this site if allocated.
- IIA7
  - It will be necessary for many people to travel to their place of work from the site; but once again, this is entirely consistent with the determination that should be reached in respect of all sites for Wickham.
- IIA8
  - The site will have a negligible impact upon this objective as the land is not proposed to be designated for employment provision and is not in employment use.
- IIA9
  - It is irrational to conclude that the site will give rise to a significant negative impact upon biodiversity interest. There is no significant interest present on site, the land is of a low biodiversity value, and its delivery for development would provide significant and overriding opportunities for biodiversity net gain (BNG) having regard for the sheer quantum of greenspace that can be delivered by the site.
  - The site should have scored neutrally or minor positively in this regard.
- IIA10
  - The site does not have any significant landscape sensitivity, as the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by UBU Design and submitted alongside these representations concludes.
  - The site should have scored neutrally on this point.
- IIA11
  - The site will not impact significantly upon any heritage assets, and there is only a single Grade II listed dwelling within a reasonable proximity of the site.
  - It is not considered that the significance of this heritage asset will be impacted by the development.
- IIA12

- The majority of the site is low value greenfield land, which is utilised for low impact grazing. The land comprises predominantly low grade agricultural land, which is not best and most versatile land.
- We consider it irrational for the site to have been scored significant negative in this regard.
- IIA13
  - The site will have a negligible impact upon this objective as it is not located within any groundwater source protection zones.
- IIA14
  - The site is located outside of any zones of fluvial or surface water flood risk with respect to those areas that will be brought forward for development.

We do not agree with many of the conclusions reached by Winchester Council in respect of the IIA for *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*.

It should be noted that almost identical conclusions were reached within the IIA for *Site WI03 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road*, as is reflected within the table excerpt below.

*Excerpt – Integrated Impacts Assessment (IIA) – Appendix 2 – WI03 Southwick Road/School road Wickham*

<b>IIA Objective</b>	<b>Score</b>
IIA1: climate change mitigation	Minor negative (-)
IIA2: travel and air quality	Minor negative (-)
IIA4: health and wellbeing	Minor positive (+)
IIA7: services and facilities	Minor negative (-)
IIA8: economy	Negligible uncertain (0?)
IIA9: biodiversity and geodiversity	Significant negative (--)
IIA10: landscape	Negligible uncertain (0?)
IIA11: historic environment	Negligible uncertain (0?)
IIA12: natural resources	Significant negative (--)
IIA13: water resources	Negligible (0)
IIA14: flood risk	Negligible (0)

Having regard for the conclusions of the Integrated Impact Assessment therefore, *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* is no less sustainable than *Site WI03 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road*, which has been formally allocated and supported by Winchester City Council.

We consider that there is no appropriate justification or rationale for the exclusion of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* as a strategic allocation on this basis.

The conclusions reached within the IIA for *Site WI02 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham* are unreasonable and irrational, having regard for the conclusions otherwise reached in

respect of both *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, and *Site WI03 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road*. We do not consider that this site is in any manner more sustainable in terms of its proximity to the settlement and services and facilities than the other two sites selected and moreover there are significant negative landscape impacts that would arise from the delivery of this site within an enclosed rural landscape which appears divorced from the settlement, and which would materially change Mill Street to the detriment of the character of this historical route into Wickham settlement from the South Downs National Park to the north. There is absolutely no rationale for scoring the other two sites as minor negative on objectives IIA1, IIA2 and IIA4 and this site as Minor Positive in this regard. This is completely inconsistent and unjustified.

*Excerpt – Integrated Impacts Assessment (IIA) – Appendix 2 – WI02 Mill Street, Wickham*

<b>IIA Objective</b>	<b>Score</b>
IIA1: climate change mitigation	Minor positive (+)
IIA2: travel and air quality	Minor positive (+)
IIA4: health and wellbeing	Minor positive (+)
IIA7: services and facilities	Minor positive (+)
IIA8: economy	Negligible uncertain (0?)
IIA9: biodiversity and geodiversity	Significant negative (--)
IIA10: landscape	Negligible uncertain (0?)
IIA11: historic environment	Negligible uncertain (0?)
IIA12: natural resources	Significant negative (--)
IIA13: water resources	Negligible (0)
IIA14: flood risk	Negligible (0)

We consider that the conclusions of the IIA are fundamentally flawed with respect to the sites assessed at Wickham and indeed this assessment has influenced the decisions taken with respect to those sites to select and formally allocate for housing development.

We consider that there are significant and material benefits to be derived from *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, which have been ignored, and in particular with respect to *Site WI02 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham*, the conclusions reached are out of step with the other assessments and irrational.

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**Winchester City Council  
Pre-Submission Local Plan  
Regulation 19 Consultation**

**SPATIAL STRATEGY and STRATEGIC AND NON-  
STRATEGIC POLICIES**

## Winchester Local Plan - Spatial Strategy

The overarching spatial strategy of the Winchester Local Plan comprises the identification of three distinct 'spatial areas', comprising (1) The Market Towns and Rural Area; comprising the largest area, (2) Winchester Town, and (3) the South Hampshire Urban Areas.

The Market Towns and Rural Area (MTRA) includes all of the rural settlements within the district and the undeveloped countryside outside of the South Downs National Park. The primary vision for this area is to support a level of development that serves local needs in an accessible and sustainable way which promotes the vitality and viability of all communities and maintains the character and identity of the distinct settlements.

As set out with Policy SP2, the housing target for the MTRA comprises about 3,825 dwellings. The pattern of development proposed within the MTRA is intended to be proportionate in scale to the individual settlements and to enable a sustainable pattern of growth which will preserve their identity and countryside setting. It is however recognised that the MTRA contains a number of large settlements which themselves are clearly capable of supporting significant growth.

The PSLP cites that there is a high level of existing commitments within the MRTA, which have yet to be delivered from previous development plan allocations. It is unclear whether Winchester Council have considered whether these sites remain deliverable or indeed there are fundamental reasons why such sites have not come forwards for development in a timely manner. We offer no specific comment in respect of these sites at this time.

Within the scope of the MTRA, there are four distinct settlement categories, forming a settlement hierarchy:

- Market Towns: Bishops Waltham and New Alresford;
- Larger Rural Settlements: Colden Common, Denmead, Kinsworthy, Swanmore and Wickham;
- Intermediate Rural Settlements: Hursley, Otterbourne, South Wonston, Sutton Scotney and Waltham Chase; and,
- The remaining Rural Area.

At the Regulation 18 stage, the PSLP did not actually allocate any development at Wickham settlement, despite its role as a larger rural settlement which is confirmed to be capable of delivering both local and some strategic level growth.

Instead, the plan proposed to allocate land at *Ravenswood, Knowle* for 200 homes alone, on the assumption that this would contribute towards meeting the development needs of Wickham. It is very clear from the settlement hierarchy that Knowle is itself an independent lower order settlement in the 'remaining rural area', which is substantially separated from Wickham and indeed where land has previously been designated as part of a settlement gap with the purpose of preventing the settlements from coalescing; evidencing their fundamental detachments.

At that time therefore, notwithstanding remaining non-completed commitments, no new development was proposed for Wickham. This was fundamentally inconsistent with the approach set out for the other larger rural settlements, as defined by the Council's settlement hierarchy, at Regulation 18 stage which sought to allocate around 85-200 dwellings to each larger rural settlement.

Representations were made on behalf of our client at that time confirming a fundamental objection to the approach and moreover questioning why an inconsistent approach both in terms of not allocating new housing development at all larger rural settlements, and moreover to allocating a substantially different level of growth to settlements in the same tier, had been taken, having regard for their generally consistent characteristics in terms of size and service and facilities provision, which rendered them equally capable of supporting the required growth.

At Regulation 19 stage, the PSLP confirms that the 'housing approach' for the larger rural settlements to comprise the following:

- *The larger rural settlements were asked to identify new sites for around 90-100 dwellings each.*
- *Sites are allocated for this scale of housing in Kings Worthy, Colden Common and Wickham.*
- *Denmead is taking forwards a Neighbourhood Plan and will need to identify sites for around 100 dwellings as part of it.*
- *At Wickham there is also an opportunity to bring forward a site which has community support for 200 dwellings at Knowle, which has some facilities and services.*
- *A windfall allowance, alongside recent completions, commitments and existing allocations yet to be completed and carried forwards mean each settlement will achieve between 160 and 360 dwellings.*

It is clear from the direction of the spatial strategy for Wickham and the other larger rural settlements, that Winchester Council's intention was for the various Parish or Town Councils to seek to identify new sites for housing development which would enable them to have a realistic and proportionate input in to the future growth and expansion of their community areas.

This did not occur for Wickham. We understand that it was originally expressed to Wickham and Knowle Parish Council that there would be no requirement to allocate additional sites for Wickham as a result of the proposed allocation at *Ravenswood, Knowle*. However, following the Regulation 18 consultation stage, Winchester City Council approached the Parish Council indicating that sites to deliver a further 100 homes would be required. The parish Council initially sought to contest this position, however it was also indicated that if sites were required to identify an additional 100 homes, they would like to work with the City Council to identify what they considered to be the most appropriate site and strategy. Unfortunately, it appears that Winchester City Council took the decision to proceed with the selection of sites without involving Wickham and Knowle Parish Council further.

It is clear from Wickham and Knowle Parish Council that they are unhappy with the manner in which the process was handled, and moreover, that there is neither support for the two strategic sites which have been selected, nor did this accord with the wishes of local residents as was expressed in the 2022 Consultation Survey undertaken by the Parish Council.

It is understood that the results of the 2022 Parish Council Survey of the various strategic site options that Approximately 27% of responded voted in favour of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, as their preferred development site, being the most popular option. Having regard for the two currently selected sites; the results are understood to be approximately as follows:

1. Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham – 27%
2. Land at Southwick Road/Glebe – 23%
3. Land at Mill Lane – 20%

The PSLP defines the development strategy for Wickham at Page 453, which is as follows:

Wickham Housing Sources	No. of dwellings
Net Completions in or adjoining settlement (2020 - 2023)	118
Outstanding permissions (at 2023) including Local Plan allocations carried forward (Policies WK1, WK2)	88
Windfall allowance	50
New Sites allocated in this Plan (Policies WK5, WK6)	100
<b>Total Provision 2020 – 2040</b>	<b>356</b>

As we have previously discussed, it is not considered appropriate to attribute a windfall allowance to Wickham having regard for the absence of deliverable sites, and moreover, there are fundamental concerns with the two strategic site allocations selected with respect to their impact upon local character and moreover the effect of urban sprawl that the two designations create in drawing Wickham settlement to the north and east respectively out beyond the existing extent of the settlement with little meaningful built context.

We fundamentally disagree with the proposed spatial strategy of the PSLP in this respect. The spatial strategy neither appropriately meets the needs of Wickham settlement in full in a manner that certainty can be provided regarding proposed housing delivery, nor does it properly consider which option would deliver the greatest community benefit and comprises the most joined up approach in spatial planning terms to deliver a high quality sense of place and environment for existing and future residents of Wickham and Knowle.

We consider that *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* comprises the logical development site opportunity having regard for the opportunity to round off the settlement boundary and moreover deliver a pattern of development that delivers clear strategic connections and a joined up approach to open greenspace provision with the proposed allocations at Knowle and Welborne.

The allocation of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* will not prejudice the function of the settlement gap, or its intended function in preventing the distinct settlements of Wickham, Knowle and Welborne from coalescing, however, the designation of the land will allow for the formal designation of a significant part of the settlement gap as publicly accessible greenspace that can be transferred into public ownership and preserved as open in perpetuity.

We consider that it would be appropriate to reconsider the proposed allocations for Wickham, and whether *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, should be allocated in place of both *Site W102 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham*; and, *Site W103 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road*. However, should the Inspector consider that there is no justification for the removal of the other sites, we consider it would remain appropriate to allocate *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* for housing development as part of this local plan process in order to address the windfall need in the short term, which there is no evidence how this will be otherwise delivered having regard for historic windfall rates, and moreover, as reserved land to be brought forwards as part of the next plan making process, which it is anticipated Winchester City Council will be required to commence work on immediately pursuant to the adoption of the current local plan in view of the significant increase in housing need proposed by the new Standard Method for calculation housing need that the Government are committed to bringing forwards.

We consider that there is sufficient justification to bring forwards *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* at this stage, in favour of the other development opportunities and indeed we understand that this is a position endorsed by Wickham and Knowle Parish Council.

We propose the following Policy wording, comprised within new Policy WK7 – Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham

<b>Policy WK7</b>
<b>Land at Mayles Farm</b>
<p>Land at Mayles Farm as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for around 100 dwellings. Planning permission will be granted provided that details accord with the Development Plan and meet the following specific requirements.</p> <p>Nature and Phasing of Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The development is phased for the latter part of the local plan period and the commencement of development on site is not anticipated before 2030;</li> </ol> <p>Access</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. The development shall be accessed primarily from Hoad's Hill in a location that minimises hedgerow removal and ensures good visibility for all vehicles entering and egressing.</li> <li>iii. Smaller development parcels delivering properties directly accessed from Mayles Lane may be services from Mayles Lane, but there shall be no vehicular through route delivered</li> </ol>



- iv. The proposals shall include direct, safe and lit pedestrian and cycle linkages which support sustainable patterns of travel and minimise car journeys from the development by providing clear opportunities for walking and cycling.
- v. The public pedestrian linkages shall include a connection to the wetlands on the western side of Mayles Lane, and through connectivity to the existing recreation ground immediately to the north of the site.
- vi. New public transport connectivity shall be delivered to connect with existing services in order to encourage use of local bus services in preference to private vehicles.
- vii. The planning application shall be accompanied by a detailed transport assessment and travel plan that confirms how support will be given for sustainable means of travel through the design of the development and shall consider whether any further improvements are required to Hoad's Hill to accommodate the increase in traffic.

#### Environmental

- viii. The development shall deliver an accessible and permeable public open greenspace, providing connectivity to the Welborne development to the south, and a crossing on Mayles Lane which provides access to the additional wetlands open space which is proposed to be delivered as part of the development.
- ix. Landscape buffers shall be provided in order to minimise the impacts of the development on existing residents adjacent to the existing properties at Manor Close to the north of the site, and to the existing properties at Hoad's Hill on the eastern side of the site.
- x. The development shall retain and enhance existing landscape features where possible, except where their removal is required for access or to enable the development,
- xi. Careful consideration shall be given to the impact of the development upon the setting of the Grade II listed Mayles, Mayles Lane, to the west of the site.
- xii. A sustainable pattern of drainage infrastructure through landscape features shall be provided where possible in accordance with the approach set out in Policy NE6.
- xiii. A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be prepared as part of any detailed stage application which discusses how ecological interest and short term environmental impacts of the development will be managed during the course of construction.
- xiv. The development shall maximise opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain where possible and achieve a minimum of 10% net gain.

#### Other infrastructure

- xv. The development shall deliver both a full size grass adult football pitch and a junior grass football pitch.
- xvi. Public parking to service the proposed sports facilities alongside access to the greenspace shall be delivered in an appropriate location.
- xvii. Occupation of development will be phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, in consultation with the service provider;
- xviii. The development shall otherwise contribute towards the infrastructure necessary to render the development acceptable in planning terms.

We ask that the Inspector call a formal EIP hearing session in relation to the strategic approach to Wickham settlement, to consider the formal allocation of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* as an omission site, and moreover the consider in full the approach proposed to the settlement gap and with Welborne Open Space subject of Policy WK3, as is discussed in detail within the ensuing section.

### **Proposed Strategic and Non-Strategic Policies**

The PSLP is comprised of a collection of both 'strategic' and 'non-strategic' polices as Paragraphs 18 and 19 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirm to be appropriate.

Paragraph 21 of the NPPF directs that the PSLP must make explicitly clear which policies are strategic policies and indeed that these should be limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area; and indeed, any cross-boundary issues, and that these should provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies considered necessary.

Paragraph 21 also makes clear that strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters which should be dealt with more appropriately through Neighbourhood Plans or non-strategic policies.

Alongside this, Paragraph 22 of the NPPF directs that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption to anticipate and response to long term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure.

The following comments are provided in respect of specific policies of the PSLP, where we consider that appropriate changes are required in order to render them sounds, or having regard to those other representations made in respect of the acceptability of the PSLP approach to meeting housing needs and its general soundness.

We do not offer comment in respect of a majority of polices of the PSLP which may or may not be sound in their drafting or require modification at the EIP stage. We reserve the right to offer further comment in respect of those other policies where necessary should it become apparent that these prejudice our clients' interests, should the opportunity arise.

#### *Policy H4 – Development Within Settlements*

Whilst we consider that the overarching direction and function of the policy is appropriate, we consider that the Policies Map relating to Wickham settlement should be appropriately updated to reflect the inclusion of the urban area of proposed strategic allocation, *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, within the settlement boundary.

We have enclosed a proposed plan titled 'Wickham Modified Settlement Boundary' (Appended at **ABs1**) for the ease of reference. The proposed boundary excludes that land which it is suggested will comprise part of the connected framework of open

greenspace at the southern end of Wickham settlement and which will form a cohesive country park style designation with the Welborne Garden Village SANG.

The proposed revised settlement boundary will ensure that the 'settlement gap' between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village is maintained as open in perpetuity.

As we discuss in response to Policy NE7 – Settlement Gaps, it is not considered that the allocation of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* will prejudice the role or function of the proposed settlement gap. The allocation of the land will instead, as a matter of fact, enable public access to a significant area of additional open greenspace, which can be transferred into public ownership and provide certainty that this land will remain open in perpetuity. The proposed approach to the land provides certainty of the openness of the gap, and will in no manner undermine or prejudice its function or lead to the coalescence of the settlements.

Alongside this, the proposed approach will ensure that there is no need to modify the settlement gap in the future, which has clearly occurred within successive development plans whereby Winchester Council have latterly released land from the settlement gaps for development.

There is in our view no reasonable rationale for the allocation of land within a defined settlement gap, on the basis that said land is considered to be important to preserving the separate identity of the settlements that it sits between, if the land can then be later considered again for release and development. In such circumstances, either only that land which is fundamentally necessary to ensure the settlements remains separate should be defined as forming a settlement gap, or the land should not be designated at all.

This accords entirely with the approach set out within the Partnership for Southern Hampshire (PFSH) guidance, on the basis of which Winchester Council suggest the policy approach is based.

Fundamentally the release of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* for development will have no impact at all upon the integrity of the settlement gap, as the below plan excerpt (appended to this representation in full at **ABs2**), demonstrates.

The proposed development will round off the existing settlement boundary and indeed maintain the function of a significant belt of land which will run between the settlement and the development at Welborne Garden Village and Knowle village to the south. The difference with the allocation of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, is that the land within the settlement gap will be formally designated as open space, made available and accessible to the public and transferred into public ownership to ensure that it can be kept permanently open. There is clear and demonstrable benefit in such an approach.

*Excerpt – ABs2 - Wickham Built Edge and Settlement Gap Plan*



In this respect, the proposed amended settlement boundary for Wickham as drawn (Appendix **ABs1**), is entirely rational and would provide a sustainable expansion to Wickham settlement, incorporating *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, as a strategic site and providing a permanent public open greenspace within the settlement gap that can be transferred into public ownership and maintained permanently open. This would ensure that there is no change to the settlement gap with future local plans and indeed accords precisely with the intended purpose of the settlement gap to prevent coalescence.

In line with the other representations made in respect of the PSLP, we ask therefore that the Inspector consider formally the introduction of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* as an omissions site either in replacement of strategic sites: *Site W102 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham*; and, *Site W103 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road*, which we do not consider to be appropriately justified, or in supplement to these. As we have evidenced, there is no justification provided at this stage for how the 50 dwelling windfall allowance at Wickham will be met within the plan period, without an expansion of the settlement boundary as there is a fundamental lack of opportunities within the settlement boundary to deliver infill development and there are no deliverable brownfield sites, as the Winchester Council brownfield land register confirms. There is no likelihood that this house need will be met without a further modification to the settlement boundary and indeed that should occur at the strategic plan making stage with the formal allocation of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* to meet this need.

**Policy NE7 – Settlement Gaps**

The designation of settlement gaps is an accepted spatial planning tool to prevent settlements from merging with each other. With respect to those designated in Winchester City Council's plan area, the origins of these date back to the South and Mid Hampshire Structure Plans (1988 and 1989). There were subsequently carried forward into the Hampshire County Structure Plan 1994 and the Hampshire County

Structure Plan 1996-2011 and more recently have been a feature of the Local Development Plan.

Winchester Council have identified a total of nine areas within the district where it is considered that the physical separation of distinct settlements within with district require specific protection to ensure that there is no risk of coalescence of those settlements which would diminish their separate identities.

These areas of land are proposed to be formally designated as 'settlement gaps' on the basis that the Council consider these to be generally undeveloped and comprising open land. The majority of these allocations represent a continuation from the previous adopted Winchester Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2013).

The designation of such gaps is still considered important on a sub-regional basis as the PSLP confirms, with specific guidance on the criteria for designation of an open gap set out within the Partnership for Southern Hampshire (PfSH) document titled 'Policy Framework for Gaps' (December 2008).

As the PfSH Policy Framework for Gaps confirms, settlement gaps '*are spatial planning tools designed to shape the pattern of settlements - they are not countryside protection or landscape designations*'.

In this respect, they have little functionality in terms of providing green infrastructure or in increasing access for the public to greenspace on the periphery of their settlement. However, that is not to say that this cannot be a mutually performed role of such land and indeed at Paragraph 7.65 of the PSLP, the Council indicate that '*strategic gaps provide a key opportunity to provide green infrastructure around the district*'. In order for this opportunity to be realised however, it is necessary to make it attractive and viable for landowners to make their land available for such purposes. There is no realistic likelihood of landowners giving up their land within settlement gaps for green infrastructure and open space without reasonable incentive.

Where however opportunities do exist, such as at Wickham with the potential to allocate *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, bringing forwards this site for housing development would enable publicly accessible green infrastructure to be secured in perpetuity, it is clear that this opportunity would accord specifically with the direction of the PSLP.

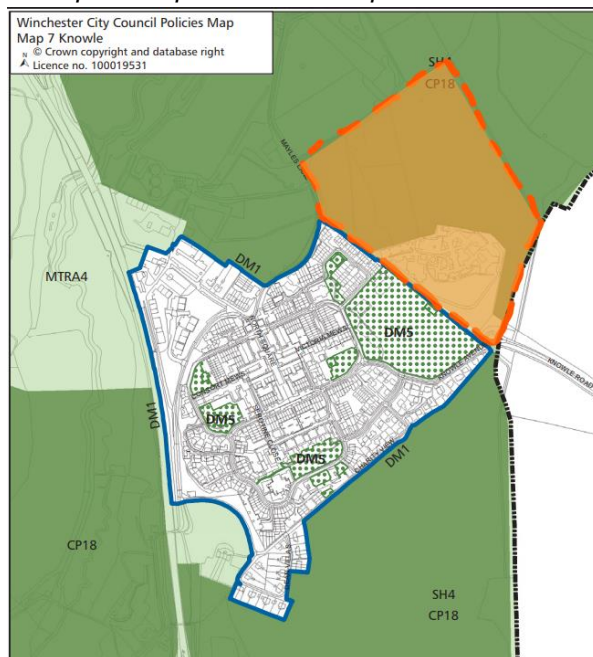
The PfSH Policy Framework for Gaps also confirms that, in defining the extent of a gap '*no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation*'.

In this respect, the extent of the strategic gap designation between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne, appears excessive. The land which is included washes over existing dwellinghouses and built development along Hoad's Hill, which has a clear and established built character, and moreover substantially exceeds what is reasonably necessary to prevent coalescence. As discussed previously, per the 'Wickham Built Edge and Settlement Gap Plan' appended at **ABs2**, with the designation of *Land at*

*Mayles Farm, Wickham* for housing development, the developed area of the allocation would simply round off Wickham settlement and still retain a significant open swathe of land which would serve equally well as a strategic gap without prejudice to its function and moreover would be provided in a manner that it could be protected and kept permanently open by taking the open greenspace into public ownership and providing a cohesive and connected network of greenspaces between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village. This indeed accords with one of the fundamental aims of the PSLP at Policy WK3.

It is clear that previous settlement gap designations have been reviewed as part of new Local Plan making processes. This is indeed the case with respect to Knowle settlement, and the designation of the *Ravenswood, Knowle* site, which is to be released from the settlement gap for housing development, alongside open greenspace. The function of the removal of this land from the settlement gap is to reduce its extent, but for the same reason we consider that the release of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, is justified, the Council have considered that this would not prejudice the settlement gap. The estimated extent of the proposed built area at *Ravenswood, Knowle* is shown (ORANGE) on the adopted policies map excerpt below for reference.

*Excerpt – Adopted Policies Map - Knowle*



It should be noted that the designation of settlement gaps is not based on any National Planning Policy guidance or mechanism set out within the NPPF or statutory legislation. There is no requirement for such gaps to be identified, and indeed, it is not a feature of most strategic development plans.

This does not mean that the designation of strategic gaps is inappropriate, however there is a question whether this is reasonably necessary given the role of other statutory planning guidance and policy within the NPPF which serves to protect the character of existing settlements in any event.

The Council have undertaken a fundamental review of the proposed settlement gaps within the evidence base document titled 'Settlement Gap Review – Winchester City Council' dated July 2024 ('the SGR'), which is intended to have informed its decision making in relation to the proposed settlement gaps within the PSLP.

There appears to be at the least a notable policy rub between the statements made within the SGR when read alongside the PfSH Policy Framework for Gaps, whereby the SGR discusses the settlement gaps as a means of identifying and protecting local landscapes including where these are sensitive, however the Policy Framework for Gaps confirms, settlement gaps '*are spatial planning tools designed to shape the pattern of settlements - they are not countryside protection or landscape designations*'.

Indeed, the purpose of the settlement gap should be solely to prevent coalescence and it should not be used as a tool to protect what are considered to be sensitive landscapes or particular landscape character areas. There are other policy mechanisms set out within the NPPF that enable such protections.

The SGR confirms that the 'Welborne Gap' between the settlements of Wickham and Knowle and the Welborne Garden Village was first introduced within the Winchester Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2013), under Policy CP18. The purpose of the designation of the settlement gap was noted to be:

*To protect the individual character and identity of those settlements adjoining the proposed strategic development area at North Fareham, an area of open land is identified as a Gap to be maintained between the strategic development area and Knowle and Wickham (see Policy SH4). Development which would threaten the open and undeveloped character of this area will be resisted and the land should be managed to secure the long-term retention of its rural character*

It is clear from the SGR that whilst seven of the nine settlement gaps across with Winchester Plan Area have been reviewed, that no review has been undertaken of the settlement gap between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne. Indeed, beyond confirming that this settlement gap remains in place, there is no meaningful discussion of these at all.

The SGR states that this has not been reviewed as permission has been granted for Welborne Garden Village and moreover that it is intended that the settlement gap will be used as open green space and infrastructure. This however is not quite correct. The Welborne Plan (2015) specifically designates buffer zones at the northern and western edges of the strategic allocation that are to comprise greenspace buffers to the Winchester Plan Area boundary and the settlements of Wickham and Knowle. The policy that governs these gaps is Policy WEL5 of The Welborne Plan (2015) and indeed this does not relate at all to the land outside of Fareham Borough Council's plan area. Policy WEL29 of The Welborne Plan governs the provision of open space and green infrastructure as part of the allocation, and likewise does not apply to land outside of the Fareham Borough Council plan area.

It is incorrect to state that the settlement gap at Wickham and Knowle is designated to service the Welborne Garden Village. This is simply not the case.

There is little rationale for not reviewing the settlement gap and Wickham, Knowle, and indeed considering whether there are opportunities which will enable the land to actually be brought forwards for open greenspace, alongside an appropriate pattern of housing development, in a manner which will not prejudice the function and role of the gap, should have been fundamental to Winchester Council's consideration of the approach to development at Wickham and Knowle.

There has clearly been some thought given to this approach for Knowle, whereby the designation of the *Ravenswood, Knowle* allocation will enable an area of open greenspace to be permanently secured which forms part of the settlement gap, but this logical approach has not been extended to Wickham, indeed it appears to have expressly been dismissed without consideration.

There is clear and demonstrable public benefit which would be gleaned from the allocation of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, and the securing of significant areas of open greenspace which would provide a connected pattern of green infrastructure between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village, alongside the meeting of the housing needs of Wickham in a sustainable way.

We do not consider that the PSLP is sound in this regard. The Council have not properly considered this important opportunity in a complex part of the Plan Area where there is significant opportunity to deliver a clear and sustainable vision for the communities of Wickham and Knowle, and a joined up approach with the Welborne Garden Village.

We ask that the EIP Inspector give due consideration to introducing a specific hearing session in relation to Wickham settlement, the settlement gap between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne and indeed the omission site *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*.

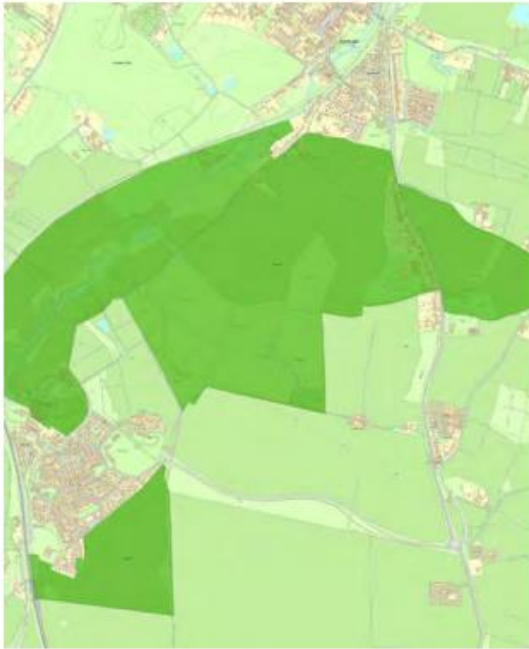
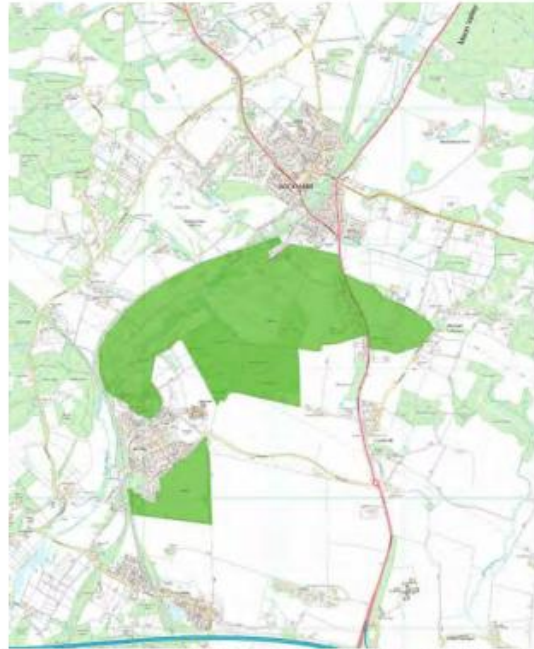
#### *Policy WK3 – Welborne Open Space*

Notwithstanding the designation of a settlement gap between the settlements of Wickham, Knowle and the neighbouring Welborne Garden Village located within Fareham Borough Council's plan area, Winchester Council are proposing that a further formal allocation be prepared for the land comprised within the settlement gap.

This allocation has been prepared without the input or knowledge of landowners and there is no likelihood that this land will be brought forwards as 'open areas'.

The PSLP proposes to allocate a significant area of land, as identified by the excerpt from page 459 of the PSLP below, comprising approximately 210ha of land in total.



**Site Plan****Wider context**

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This designation includes a number of residential dwellinghouses and their defined domestic curtilages, other buildings and a range of other land uses including land used for agricultural and equestrian purposes, over which there is currently no right of public access and indeed there would be no incentive to enable such access to be provided.

The landowners have not been consulted regarding the proposed designation of the land in this manner, and indeed the proposed approach to Policy WK3 is in our view entirely irrational.

The policy wording states:

*The city council will cooperate with Fareham Borough Council to help develop a Strategic Development Area of about 6,000 dwellings together with supporting uses, centred immediately to the north of Fareham. Land within Winchester district (as shown on the plan below) will form part of the open areas, to ensure separation between the SDA and the existing settlements of Knowle and Wickham. The open and undeveloped rural character of this land will be retained through the application of Policy NE7 – Settlement Gaps.*

In terms of the justification for the proposed allocation of this land, Winchester Council confirm at Paragraph 14.115 of the PSLP –

*Although none of the built element of the SDA [strategic development allocation?] will be within Winchester district, the SDA is a strategic issue which the Winchester District Local Plan needs to address. Green buffers are provided to ensure that Welborne does not coalesce with Wickham or Knowle. Some of the land involved will be within Fareham Borough, and the city council would encourage its location adjoining areas of new green infrastructure, so as to reinforce the buffer between Welborne and Knowle and Wickham. It is also necessary for this Plan to define the general extent of open land within Winchester district which should be retained as a gap between Welborne and*

*these settlements. It may be possible to accommodate some natural green infrastructure on land within Winchester district, provided it does not include buildings and maintains the open and rural character of the land and enables its long-term management to be secured. The overriding requirement is to retain the open rural nature of this land and to prevent changes which would urbanise its undeveloped character. The uses and management of the area must help to secure an effective, viable and long-term gap between Welborne and the separate settlements of Knowle and Wickham.*

There is absolutely no justification for this approach. No landowner party has confirmed that their land is available for this purpose and indeed there is no reason or incentive to enable the land to be brought forward. The Welborne Garden Village has been designed and arranged such that it provides for all of the public open space, SANG and other greenspace provision that was needed in order to meet the requirements of the Fareham Borough Development Plan, including The Welborne Plan (2015) and the direction of National Planning Policy set out within the NPPF. There was no reliance upon land outside of Fareham Borough to achieve this.

Policy WK3 is misleading, as it appears to suggest that the land is integral to the delivery of the Welborne Garden Village and indeed forms part of the strategic development allocation (SDA), when as a matter of fact it does not.

The Council are essentially duplicating the role and function of Policy NE7 – Settlement Gaps, through Policy WK3. The policy does not actually functionally appear to designate the land for any purpose other than to indicate that the land should be retained as open and undeveloped, but rather makes vague assertions that the land should 'form part of open areas'.

It is entirely unclear what 'forming part of open areas' entails, however, what is fundamentally clear is that this has not been developed through consultation with any of the landowners and moreover there is no prospect at all that these 'open areas' would become publicly accessible or designated open space, both for reasons that there is no incentive for land to be brought forwards for such purposes, but also that the area designation includes private residential properties.

We consider that the policy as drafted is both unreasonable and irrational and should be removed in its entirety. It serves absolutely no purpose other than to duplicate Policy NE7, and moreover is entirely incomprehensible on what it anticipates will occur.

Notwithstanding the fact that we fundamentally disagree with the proposed Policy WK3 of the PSLP, we entirely support and endorse the overarching principle of a carefully considered and joined up approach to the pattern of development at Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village. The delivery of the land to generate a substantial network of open greenspaces however needs to be properly and appropriately developed with landowners, including providing sufficient landowner incentive to bring the land forwards in a viable manner.

We have explained in detail through a clear and justified rationale how development of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, which would enable a significant part of this identified land area to be formally brought forwards as publicly accessible greenspace which would directly connect with the developments at Welborne and Knowle, could be brought forwards and we would invite the EIP Inspector to consider this matter in detail at the time of the examination.

Should Winchester Council wish to engage with us in advance of the submission of the PSLP for examination, we would welcome the opportunity to have detailed discussions either directly or through the pre-application process and moreover to aid appropriate amendments being made to the PSLP prior to its formal submission.

We consider there is a clear opportunity to deliver a sustainable expansion to Wickham settlement in a manner which would properly meet its housing needs, and alongside this to deliver the significant public benefit of access to a connected network of greenspaces creating in essence a country park between the settlements, which would be maintained permanently open and fundamentally serve the purposes of the settlement gap.

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**Winchester City Council  
Pre-Submission Local Plan  
Regulation 19 Consultation**

**LAND AT MAYLES FARM, WICKHAM – PROPOSED  
OMISSION SITE**

## **Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham – Proposed Omission Site**

### ***The Site and Surrounding Area and Technical Considerations***

*Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* measures approximately 32.34 hectares (79.91 acres) and comprises two parcels of land, one to the east and one to the west of Mayles Lane.

The site lies to the south of the larger rural settlement of Wickham and is located within the settlement gap positioned between the individual settlements of Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village.

The site is currently located outside of the defined settlement boundary and is therefore within 'open countryside' for planning purposes, however it is closely and strongly related to the existing built area of Wickham, and has built influences to the north, east and west, with ribbons of development present along both Mayles Lane to the west and Hoad's Hill to the east.

The site is largely comprised of open agricultural land, associated with Mayles Farm, and also including the farm complex and buildings associated with the farmstead. The buildings themselves are under-utilised and no longer reasonably require for agriculture.

The eastern parcel is the larger parcel of the two, and features boundary hedging and trees along much of its borders. This parcel is predominantly flat, but rises gradually to the south, offering views towards Wickham. It is split into roughly four large fields, each of which is accessed via an internal track from the farm complex, with the exception of the field to the west of Mayles Farm, which has its own direct access from Mayles Lane with historic access from Hoad's Hill to the east.

The eastern parcel abuts existing dwellings within the village of Wickham to the north and further dwellings located on the western side of Hoad's Hill, which are arranged in a linear fashion along the parcel's eastern boundary. Mayles Lodge is located in the parcel's north-western corner and is the one of two residential dwellings on this side of Mayles Lane.

The western parcel is notably smaller and is bounded by Mayles Lane to the south-east and the River Meon to the north-west. The site features a number of trees and hedging around its borders and is used as open grazing land. The land gradually slopes down towards the River Meon. This parcel is accessed from the private road section of Mayles Lane, which begins to the south-west of Mayles Lodge.

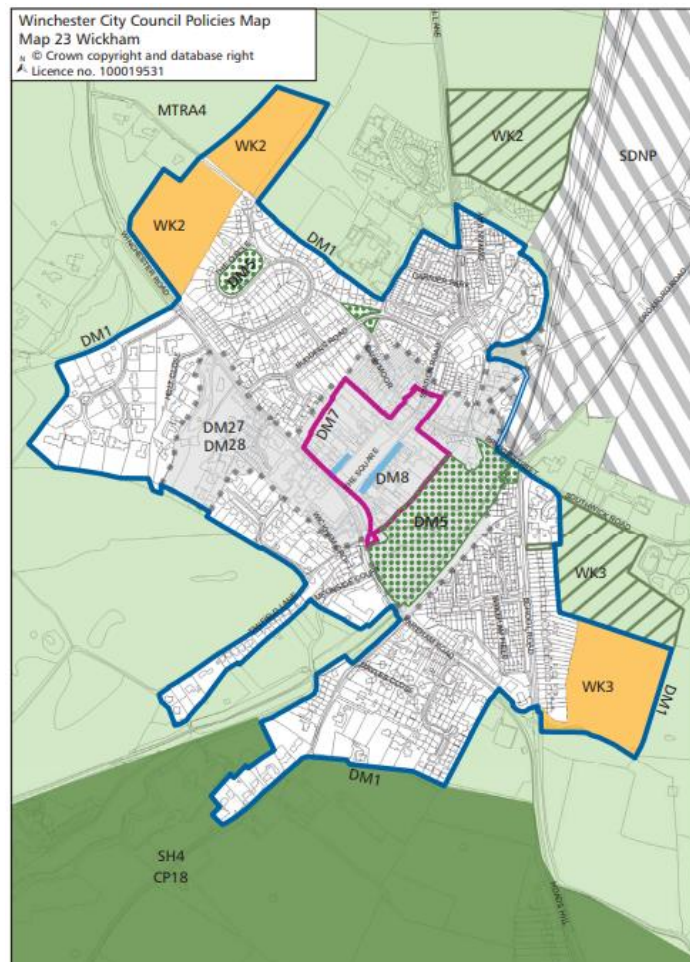
The western parcel adjoins land associated with Mayles House Cottage to the north-east. Across the river to the north, a sewerage works is located. To the parcel's south and south-west are further agricultural fields.

With regard to physical features and infrastructure within the site, a line of electricity pylons crosses the eastern parcel of land, predominantly east to west and continues across the western parcel of land.

The site is well located in a sustainable and accessible position, south of the village. Whilst Mayles Lane does not feature a pavement, there are opportunities to create pedestrian linkages to enhance accessibility. Mayles Lane is subject to a 30mph speed limit and there are bus stops located on the junction between Mayles Lane and the A334 Fareham Road.

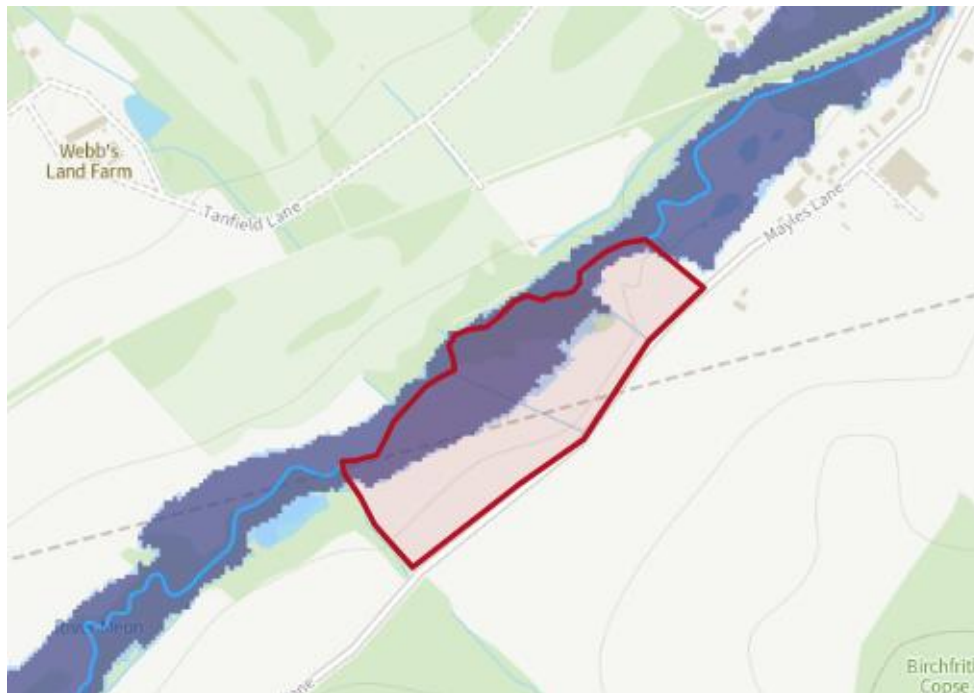
Whilst the site is currently located outside of the defined settlement, as noted it is well related to the village of Wickham, abutting its southern boundary and within a short walking distance of local services and facilities within the core of the settlement. The site is sustainably located in this respect and provides clear opportunities to deliver both new and upgraded pedestrian and cycle links to support sustainable means of travel. An extract of the current extent of the settlement boundary of Wickham, per the adopted Winchester Local Plan is provided below for reference.

*Excerpt – Winchester Council Local Plan Policies Map 23 - Wickham*



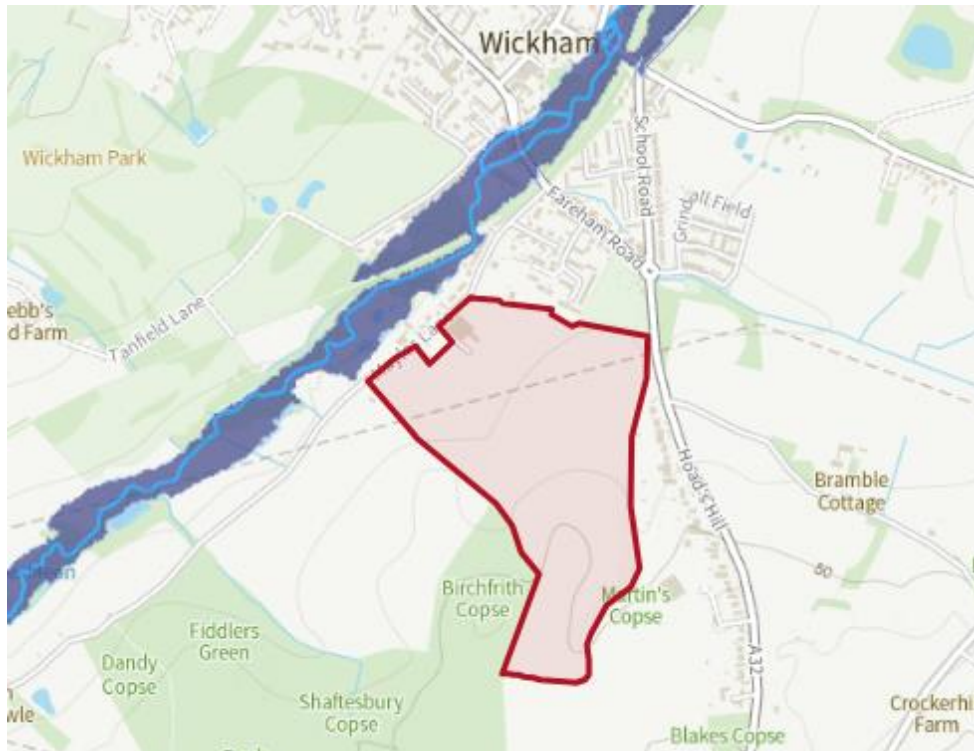
The land parcel to the west of Mayles Lane is located partly within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3, due to its proximity to the River Meon. This land parcel would be delivered solely as public open greenspace. Such patterns of use comprise water compatible development that is appropriate for location within the flood plain. The existing wetland character of the areas of the land parcel within the flood zone would be preserved and enhanced. The delivery of public access to this land will increase opportunities for the public to experience the intrinsic character of the River Meon corridor which contributes strongly to the sense of place at Wickham.

*Excerpt - Environment Agency Flood Zone Mapping – Land west of Mayles Lane*

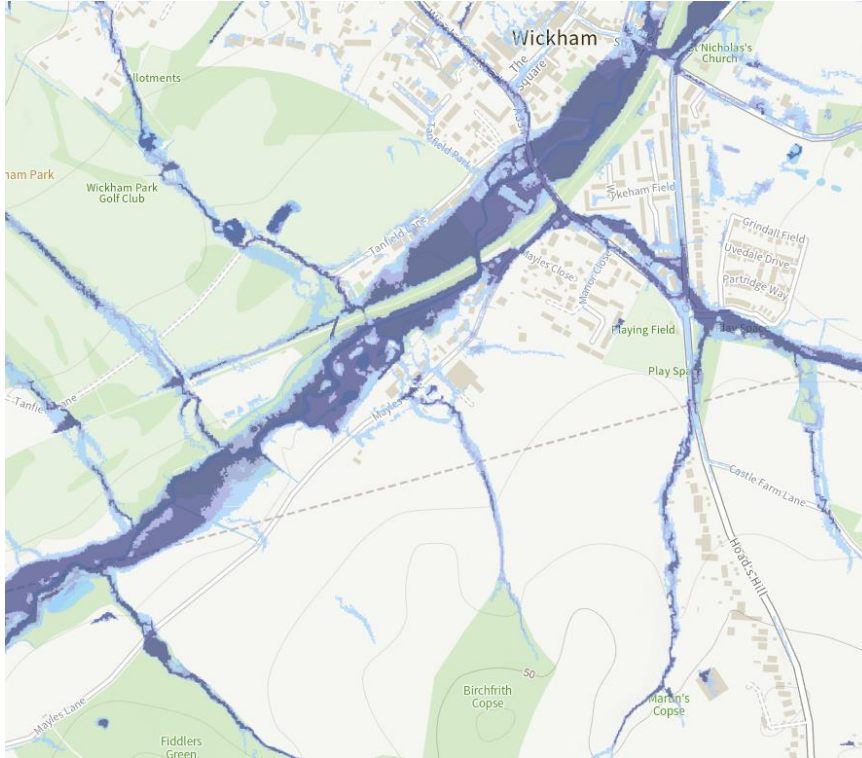


The main development parcel bounded by Mayles Lane and Hoad's Hill is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is predominantly at 'very low risk' from surface water flooding, as indicated by the Environment Agency extract maps below. There appear to be no known drainage issues across the site.

*Excerpt - Environment Agency Flood Zone Mapping – Land between Mayles Lane and Hoad's Hill*



*Excerpt - Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Map - Wickham*



The site does not feature any specific ecological designations

Birchfrith Copse, adjoining the site's eastern parcel in the south western corner, is a Site of Important Nature Conservation (SINC). This joins with the Knowle Wood Copse/Dash Wood/Ravens Wood SINC. To the site's south eastern corner, Martin's Copse is located. The River Meon is also classified as a SINC, which the western parcel adjoins.

To the site's west, some 1.5 km away, is Botley Wood and Everett's and Mushes Copses Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As such, the site falls within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone. There are no other known ecological designations close to the site.

There are no known Tree Protection Order (TPOs) relating to the site. Birchfrith Copse/Aylesbury Copses are identified as being Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, as is Martin's Copse.

The site is understood to comprise Grade 3 Agricultural Land, meaning that it is considered to be of 'good to moderate' quality at best and does not reasonably comprise the best and most versatile agricultural land.

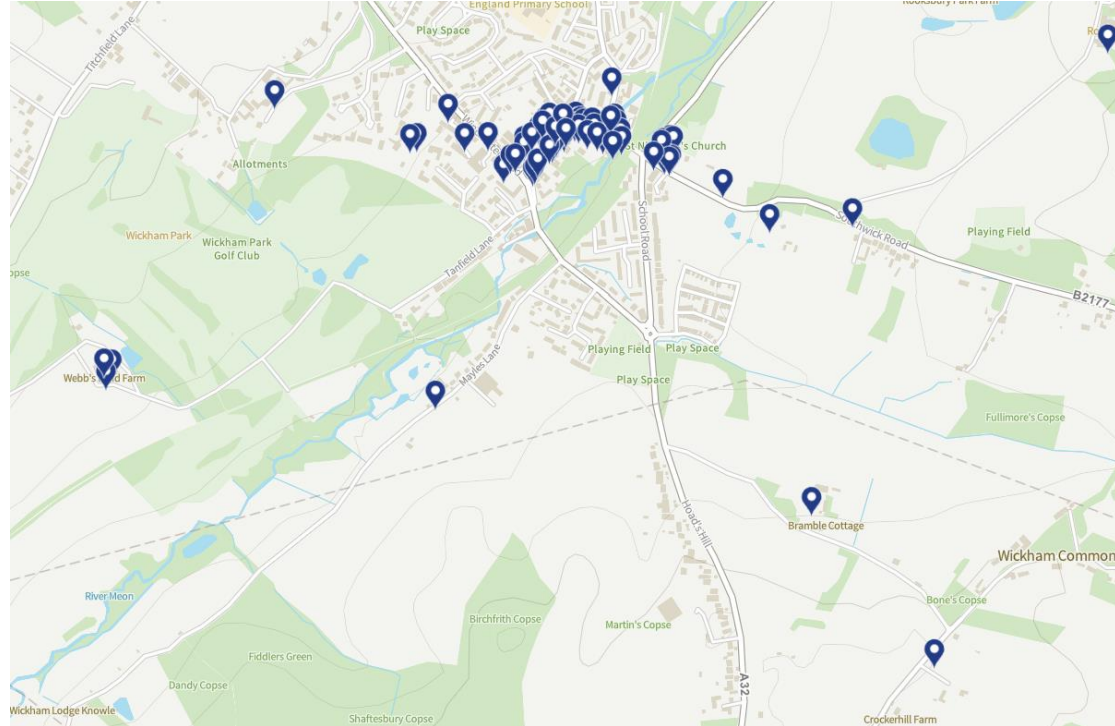
The site is not within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), nor is it within an area of 'Great Landscape Value (GLV). The site is comprised of a mix of Landscape Character Types, being of 'Mixed Farmland Woodland Enclosed', 'Mixed Farmland and Woodland' and 'River Valley Floor'.

The site does not feature any heritage designations and is not within a conservation area either.



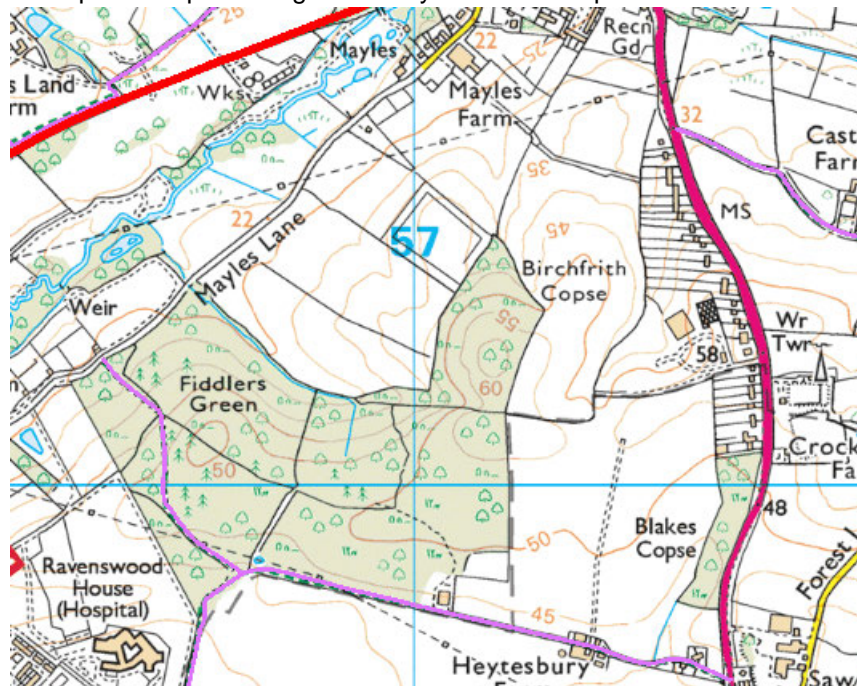
There is one Grade II listed building located within close proximity of the site. This is referred to as 'Mayles, Mayles Lane' and is a circa mid C17 house. There are no other closer heritage assets within 400 metres of the site, as indicated on the extract map below.

*Excerpt – Historic England Heritage Map Search - Wickham*



There are no Public Rights of Way within this site. However, there are other footpaths in the wider area between Mayles Lane and Hoad's Hill and between Tanfield Lane and Titchfield Lane.

*Excerpt – Hampshire Rights of Way Definitive Map*



There are no known sources of contamination on site having regard for its historic patterns of use. It is possible that there will be minor contaminant sources arising from the most recent agricultural functions of the land holding, however these are unlikely to be of such significance that they are not readily remediated.

The British Geological Survey (BGS) Geology Viewer advises that the site is underlain with a mix of Whitecliff Sand and London Clay formations; comprising generally clay, sand and silt. In principle the site should be suitable for infiltration, however detailed assessment will be required in order to inform any detailed drainage proposals.

The following table provides a summary of the various technical constraints of *Land at Mayles Lane, Wickham*:

<b>Technical Matter</b>	<b>Response</b>
<i>Flood Risk – Fluvial and Surface Water</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed development area is located solely within Flood Zone 1.</li> <li>• There is no significant surface water flood risk across the site as a whole</li> <li>• The land parcel west of Mayles Lane is subject to some Flood Risk falling within FZ2 and FZ3, however this land would be solely provided as public open space.</li> <li>• Any application shall be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Detailed Drainage Strategy including ground water monitoring (GWM) and BRE365 compliant infiltration testing.</li> </ul>
<i>Ecology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no known significant ecological interest on the land. The land has been generally been grazed and thus the species diversity is at present limited.</li> <li>• Full ecological assessment will be required to inform any application and an appropriate ecological baseline will need to be formed for the purposes of considering Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).</li> <li>• Having regard for the existing site condition, there are significant opportunities for biodiversity enhancement to be delivered.</li> </ul>
<i>Trees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no trees subject of known Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on site, and no significant arboricultural constraints within the development parcel.</li> <li>• Existing trees are located on the perimeter of the site and will be retained as part of the development.</li> <li>• There are significant opportunities for new tree planting to contribute to the local landscape character and deliver biodiversity enhancement</li> </ul>
<i>Heritage and Archaeology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a single designated heritage asset within a reasonable proximity of the site, the Grade II listed Mayles, Mayles Lane.</li> <li>• There is no known archaeological significance on site.</li> </ul>

**Contamination**

- Appropriate desk based and geophysical archaeological assessment will be undertaken to inform any application
- There is no known contamination risk on site having regard for the historic patterns of use.
- Any application should be accompanied by appropriate desk based contaminated land assessment.

**Wickham Settlement**

Wickham is a thriving rural village with a number of local shops, services, facilities and amenities. This includes a recreation ground, garage and convenience store, a county store/farm equipment supplier, a shopping centre, convenience stores, a number of pubs, cafes and restaurants, a hotel, skatepark, church, primary school and community centre. The area is well served by public transport, with a number of bus stops located around the village.

Having regard for the proposed spatial strategy of the PSLP, it is clear that there is a need for housing growth at Wickham. The settlement has been allocated a minimum of 150 homes as part of the proposed spatial strategy, with 100 homes currently indicated to be delivered on strategic sites, and a further 50 required by windfall development.

The development of *Land at Mayles lane, Wickham* would comprise a logical expansion of the village, contributing to its future viability whilst preserving and respecting the important visual gap between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village. The development would sit betwixt with other residential development along Mayles Lane and Hoad's Hill and would round off the southern boundary of Wickham settlement as opposed to creating a new projecting figure of development out into the landscape. alongside this the development would deliver significant public open greenspace preserving and ensuring the retention in perpetuity of the open gap between the settlements. There are clear and significant benefits which would be derived from the allocation of *Land at Mayles lane, Wickham*.

**History of Strategic Promotion**

A search of the Council's Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) between 2019 and 2023 reveals the site has been promoted to Winchester City Council for strategic allocation only as part of this most recent strategic planning process. Prior to 2019, there is little evidence of the site having been available and deliverable for housing development.

Winchester City Council's assessment of the site within the context of the 2019-2023 SHELAA is set out below for reference:

**SHELAA 2023 – Site Ref. WI24 – Mayles Farm, Mayles Lane, Wickham:**

- The site is deemed to be deliverable and developable.
- The site is immediately available for development.

- The site has capacity for up to 475 dwellings (Use Class C3), based on a density of 30dph in the countryside.
- The phasing of this delivery would be between 0 to 5 years.

*SHELAA 2021 – Site Ref. WI24 – Mayles Farm, Mayles Lane, Wickham:*

- The site is deemed as deliverable and developable.
- The site is immediately available for development.
- The site has capacity for 475 dwellings (Use Class C3), based on a density of 30dph in the countryside.
- The phasing of this delivery would be between 0 to 5 years.

*SHELAA 2020 – Site Ref. WI24 – Mayles Farm, Mayles Lane, Wickham:*

- The site has been scored Green so therefore is deemed as deliverable/developable and is suitable for inclusion in the SHELAA 2020.
- The site is available for development.
- The site has capacity for 475 dwellings (Use Class C3), based on a density of 30dph in the countryside.
- The phasing of this delivery would be between 0 to 5 years.

*SHELAA 2019 – not included in SHELAA.*

Having regard for the SHELAA appraisals from 2020-2023, it is clear that the Winchester City Council first became aware of the potential of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, as a site for housing development since at least 2020.

Despite this, the PSLP at present seeks to overlook this potential and focus on the retention of the land as part of the settlement gap and not to seek its formal allocation.

We do not consider, having regard for the Council's previous assessment of the site, that there is reasoned justification for not bringing *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, forwards for housing development as part of this strategic plan making process.

***The Proposed Development***

A Framework Masterplan has been prepared for *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, by Pegasus Group and is submitted alongside this representation for the EIP Inspector's reference. The Framework Masterplan indicates how the site might be brought forward for strategic development, comprising a scheme of around 100 dwellinghouses, and alongside this the delivery of a significant provision of public open greenspace.

The Framework Masterplan has been developed having regard for the following general principles and parameters:

- A built development area of approximately 7.15ha.
  - Approximately 1ha along Mayles Lane that shall provide around 10 houses
  - The remaining development site area will provide a net density of approximately 20dph assuming a scheme of 100-120 dwellings.

- At 30dph, having regard for the SHELAA capacity assessment of the site, the same development area could deliver approximately 150-180 dwellings.
- The provision of approximately 25.2ha of public open greenspace, comprising a mix of natural greenspace, formal public open space, sports provision and formal play.
  - The development incorporates a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP);
  - The development incorporates two grass football pitches, one full sized adult pitch, and one junior pitch.
- The primary access for the site will be delivered from Hoad's Hill to the east with a new junction and appropriate visibility splays provided to ensure appropriate means of access and egress.
- Secondary development parcels will be serviced directly from Mayles Lane, comprising low density dwellinghouses directly accessed from the lane. There shall be no internal vehicular connection between the development along Mayles lane and the broader scheme.
- New pedestrian and cycle connections shall be formed through a well considered pattern of pathways through the development connecting to existing points of interest and desire lines to provide a highly permeable development which supports sustainable patterns of movement.
- Connectivity shall be delivered between the main development site and the additional greenspace west of Mayles Lane through a crossing feature.
- The development shall deliver appropriate connectivity with the Welborne Garden Village to the south, and consider how connections are formed to the *Ravenswood, Knowle* proposed allocation.
- A landscaped buffer comprising open greenspace and planting shall be located to the northern edge of the site to provide an appropriate set back of new development from existing dwellinghouses to preserve their privacy and amenity.
- An appropriate landscaped buffer shall be incorporated to those properties fronting Hoad's Hill on the eastern edge of the site to preserve their privacy and amenity.
- The high voltage power lines across the site have been provided with a generous easement from any development, such that these could be retained by the development if it is not viable or technically achievable to see these buried.

The Applicant has instructed the services of UBU Design, landscape consultancy, to undertake a fundamental review of the sensitivity of the local landscape and the capacity of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* for development without harm to local landscape character.

The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by UBU Design is enclosed alongside this representation for the EIP Inspector's reference.

Alongside the LVIA, UBU Design have prepared a short accompanying Landscape Supporting Statement, which concludes:

*This site, due to its medium to low landscape value and medium to low sensitivity, offers an opportunity to add to the existing settlement with an overall anticipated improvement and benefit to the landscape, local biodiversity and the community alike with linked footpaths and access to open space, whilst maintaining a strong perceptible visual gap, strengthened by new open space, extensive and significant woodland and scrub planting for biodiversity and overall improvement of the local landscape resource.*

It is clear that whilst the development of Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham would result in some physical reduction of the settlement gap with built development, it would not visually reduce the gap, as is evident from the LVIA appraisal. This conclusion is as a result of the limited views from the local context to the site, and those views that are achievable are both occupied by existing built development or influenced by strong man made elements such as the substantial pylons on site.

As a result of the development, the settlement gap between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne Garden Village would still be maintained at over half a kilometre, where measured from the bottom edge of the development to the northern edge of the Welborne Garden Village development.

This is a substantial gap and it is fundamentally clear that there will be no prejudice to the settlement gap designation from the allocation of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*.

The submitted Framework masterplan and other technical work demonstrate that the Site will:

- Deliver a quantum of housing development in a sustainable manner which meets local needs for both market and affordable housing.
- Deliver a development that is landscape lead and has regard for the other technical constraints such as; accessibility, ecological value and interest, and surface water drainage which will positively integrate the site as an attractive extension to Wickham settlement that provides an appropriate framework for public recreation which connects with and delivers the broader public and environmental benefit of a significant and cohesive greenspace alongside the Welborne Garden Village and development at *Ravenswood, Knowle*.
- The development will, through its open greenspace strategy mitigate any potential impacts of development upon the South Downs National Park through additional recreational pressure, through the delivery of on-site opportunities for walking, formal and informal play and general recreation for both new and existing residents.
- Integrate landscape and biodiversity enhancements into the network of open green spaces alongside sustainable drainage infrastructure that provide a varied character of environmental and interest and help reinforce the character of this edge of settlement location. The scheme will retain and protect hedgerows and trees of value, including the wooded on the periphery of the site, and the future network of greenspaces will be carefully managed to enhance their recreational function. The development will seek to integrate those existing landscape features within the network of green spaces where possible.

- Provide a development which reinforces the location on the edge of the settlement, with properties with well-proportioned private amenity spaces alongside the public open space, which allow for secure recreation and will provide opportunities for a verdant pattern of development.
- Provide a community recreation space in the heart of the community that allows for public gathering, and a community focal point.
- Provide a range of broad streets that allow for landscaped buffers and narrower streets that provide a more intimate residential setting.
- Comply otherwise with the requirements of any imposed Strategic Site Policy and the broader Development Plan, in providing a sustainable mix of housing types which contribute towards to assessed needs of the District. In particular to deliver first time homes, family homes and downsizing units to cater for the needs of the population as a whole, at an appropriate density and within an urban framework which is permeable and facilitates opportunities for sustainable patterns of movement, walking and cycling, throughout the strategic allocation and to the broader Wickham settlement.
- Create new public footpath links through the site, opening up new options for connectivity supporting pedestrian and cycle movements which will be of benefit to the wider community.
- Consider carefully the scale of built form on the site acknowledging the general low rise of buildings within the local area and acknowledging a need for a variety of scale including lower density at the fringes. The scheme will consider focal point buildings in appropriate locations to provide visual and architectural interest and facilitate some higher density forms and tenures of accommodation to support a mixed and diverse community.
- Seek to deal with surface water drainage in a sustainable manner without reliance on engineered solutions, and ensure development is located where it will not be at risk of flooding now or into the future.
- Deliver a development which responds appropriately to its constraints and opportunities and positively assimilates into Wickham settlement as a high-quality landscape led residential development, set against the existing urban area, which provides social, economic and environmental benefits to the village.

Having regard for the direction of the Framework masterplan, development across the site as a whole will be generally of two storeys in height to eaves level with pitched or hipped roof, respective of the local vernacular. Dwellings are generally arranged in an outward facing manner on to the communal spaces, providing natural surveillance. In the higher density areas, there will be some inward facing properties which look out on to the street scene in a typical manner with front parking courtyards and even in these cases they provide natural surveillance which adds to the quality of the street scene. The development has been arranged to make the most of its landscaped context.

The layout of streets and spaces features areas of shared surfacing and surface changes to moderate vehicular speeds. The roads are appropriately scaled to further reduce speed and feature positive speed management in terms of narrowing and priority areas to facilitate a positive relationship between vehicular and pedestrian movements. Vehicular movements will be controlled in order to give priority to

pedestrians and multiple walking routes are provided with dedicated footpaths, pedestrian pavements and shared spaces providing a loose grid and choice of routes throughout the site.

Appropriate use of materials across the development as a whole will assist in assimilating the development into the site and positively contribute to local character and sense of place. It is evident that the main road through the site will need to be developed to adoptable standards, but the manner in which footways are treated will aid to soften these and make them appropriate for their setting.

We consider that *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* comprises the best opportunity for housing growth at Wickham settlement, and we invite the EIP Inspector to consider allocating the site as an omissions site, having regard for the clear support from Wickham and Knowle Parish Council and the significant public benefits which would arise from the delivery of this site and a comprehensive and connected approach being taken regarding the provision of public open greenspace which will permanent preserve the settlement gap between Wickham, Knowle and Welborne without prejudice to its purposes or function.

Should the EIP Inspector consider that further information is required in respect of Land at Mayles Laen, Wickham, we will be happy to provide this on request.

We ask Winchester City Council to consider formal engagement with us at this stage in respect of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, having regard for the strong support for the allocation of this site expressed by Wickham and Knowle Parish Council in favour of the two currently proposed strategic allocations to include *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* as a strategic site within the PSLP now prior to submission for examination.

*Framework Masterplan – Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*





**Winchester City Council  
Pre-Submission Local Plan  
Regulation 19 Consultation**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Ken Parke Planning Consultants Ltd  
On Behalf of Macra Ltd  
October 2024**

## Conclusions

With respect to the matter of Legal Compliance, we do not consider that Winchester City Council has appropriately demonstrated that the PSLP meets the various tests of compliance with National Policy, of soundness having regard for the tests set out at Paragraph 35 of the NPPF, or in respect of the expectations of Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the NPPF in working with local communities and statutory consultees to direct and shape the development of their communities. We consider in this regard that there is currently a failing to comply with the primary legislation directing the approach to plan making, and that main modifications will be necessary in order to render the plan sound.

At present the PSLP, with respect to Wickham settlement, does not acknowledge the diligent work of Wickham and Knowle Parish Council in engaging with local residents to determine how they see Wickham settlement growing into the future and indeed the opportunities presented by a connected approach to development at the southern end of Wickham settlement, through allocation of *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* with the strategic approach to development at Knowle and the neighbouring Welborne Garden Village located outside of the plan area.

The PSLP is not sufficiently forward thinking in this respect and does not present a joined up framework that demonstrates that the interplay between the various priorities for development has been appropriately considered, or indeed that opportunities for a joined up approach to development s has been properly considered or explored.

The PSLP does not currently seek to meet the Council's objectively assessed needs, in full. It is entirely unclear how the windfall development allowance for Wickham settlement will be delivered, having regard for past rates of windfall development and indeed the opportunities for development that exist within the settlement boundary being limited if any.

We do not consider that the approach to the identification of the two strategic development sites: *Site WI02 – Land at Mill Lane, Wickham*; and, *Site WI03 – Land at Southwick Road/School Road* is reasonable or justified. Both of these options expressly stand contrary to the aims of avoiding the sprawl of the settlement, which Wickham and Knowle Parish Council were expressly clear that they wished to avoid. Neither allocation will best contribute to the character of Wickham settlement or comprise a sustainable expansion which would not lead to potential further urban sprawl in the future.

As we have substantiated, *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham* has a development capacity of at least 100 dwellings. We have prepared and submitted a high level Framework Masterplan and Public Open Space Plan, which indicate how the site could be brought forward for development, and how this would create a cohesive and connected development with Welborne Garden Village, and sustainable connections to Knowle village and the development at *Ravenswood, Knowle*.

We consider that there is a clear and justified rationale for including *Land at Mayles Farm, Wickham*, as a strategic site within the PSLP now. We would strongly encourage Winchester City Council to add the site into the plan prior to its formal submission for examination.

We would welcome direct engagement with Winchester City Council in this regard.

We would request to attend and give oral evidence on this and all other relevant matters in respect of the Winchester District Local Plan should it proceed to examination.

Yours sincerely



Planning Director

**Direct email:** 

**Website:** [www.kenparkeplanning.com](http://www.kenparkeplanning.com)

Enclosed.

**ABs1** – Wickham Modified Settlement Boundary

**ABs2** – Wickham Built Edge and Settlement Gap Plan

**Plans** – Framework Masterplan - P21-0793\_04 MPF\_REVA

**Plans** – Mayles Farm WPC Public Open Space Plan 001

**Technical Document** – Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

**Technical Document** – Landscape Visual Impact Assessment - Supporting Text