

Response from Winchester City Council to the Inspector's Note 1

Examination of the Winchester District Local Plan 2020-2040 (the District Plan/the Plan)

Inspector: R Barrett MRTPI IHBC

Programme Officer: Ms Jill Taylor.

Address: Winchester City Council Local Plan Examination, Winchester City Council Offices, Colebrook Street, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 9LJ.

Email: Programmeofficer@winchester.gov.uk

Telephone number: 07980 732035

Examination web pages: [Local Plan Examination - Winchester District Local Plan](#)

Procedural and legal compliance:

Thank you for confirming that the Winchester District Local Plan (Local Plan 2020-2040): Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) (SD01) will be examined under the transitional arrangements that have been set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) published in December 2024, in particular paragraphs 234 to 236.

1. **What is the implication for the Plan of the transitional arrangements set out in NPPF 2024 paragraph 236, in respect of a Plan review?**

The city council fully recognises that the housing requirement in the Local Plan (SD01) is less than 80% of local housing need as calculated using the new standard methodology. Based on the Housing Topic Paper it is 752pa or 67% of the Standard Method (which is 1,127 homes per year). We further acknowledge that the local planning authority will be expected to begin work on a new plan, under the revised plan-making system provided for under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (as soon as the relevant provisions are brought into force in 2025), in order to address the shortfall in housing need.

At the time of submission, which was prior to the publication of the NPPF (2024), the city council submitted a Schedule of Proposed Modifications (SD14a). Proposed Modification PM2 makes a firm commitment that the city council will commence a Plan review as soon as possible after adoption of the Local Plan and PM3 incorporates this into the Local Plan's policies. Please see the point below regarding the Cabinet Report on the LDS.

You will be aware that since the publication of the NPPF (2024), the Chief Planning Officer has now contacted all Local Planning Authorities [Chief Planner's newsletter December 2024](#) and advised them that the Deputy Prime Minister has requested that *'all local planning authorities produce an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) within 12 weeks of the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework, i.e. by no*

later than 6 March 2025. The updated LDS should include clear, realistic, and specific dates for consultation and submission of the local plan. We ask that once updated, the LDS is made publicly available, and a copy is sent to the Ministry using the following email address: LocalPlans@communities.gov.uk AND the key information is recorded by filling out an online form'.

A Cabinet Report on the LDS has been drafted which outlines a clear and realistic timetable for the adoption of the Local Plan 2040 that will shortly be the subject of an examination and the production of the next Local Plan following that. The Cabinet Report is due to be discussed with Members at a Cabinet meeting on the [12th February 2025](#). Whilst the LDS has not yet been agreed by Members, Officers are fully committed to starting the next Local Plan review in advance of adopting the current Local Plan that is the subject of the examination. Subject to Member agreement, the intention would be to submit the updated LDS to the Local Plan examination as an Evidence Base document – this would supersede the Local Development Scheme dated 10 August 2023 (SD11).

Proposed Modifications:

You will be aware from our submission letter dated 15 November 2024 that the Schedule of Proposed Modifications (SD14a and SD14b) has been mainly prepared to address statutory consultee comments and minor changes. Thank you for noting our request in the submission letter that should it be necessary, we wish the Inspector to recommend modifications to the Plan that would make it sound and compliant with the legislative requirements as per Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 2004 Act).

2. The Council has submitted an Integrated Impact Assessment of the Plan (SD02a-SD02d). Have the proposed modifications been subject to Sustainability Appraisal Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment in the same way?

I can confirm that the Schedule of Proposed Modifications (SD14a and SD14b) have not yet been the subject of Sustainability Appraisal Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment in the same way as other policies and proposals in the Local Plan have.

The reason for this is that we fully expect that participants, as part of the examination process, may wish to comment on the Proposed Modifications and so in terms of making the most efficient use of the Local Plan budget, we considered that it would be more appropriate to undertake the above assessments after the Inspector has heard all of the comments. I am able to confirm that Land Use Consultants have been instructed to undertake these assessments once we are in a position for them to do this work.

The evidence base

Thank you for noting that the publication of a number of evidence base

documents is awaited and for bearing with us whilst we resolve outstanding matters.

You will be aware that since we submitted the Local Plan for examination Natural England have now withdrawn their objection to the Local Plan (ED04).

Compensatory habitats

Natural England, in their Regulation 19 consultation response, also advised the city council that the River Meon and River Dever are being considered as compensatory habitat for Southern Water's Drought Plan. At the point the Drought Order is enacted the River Meon will be considered as the River Itchen Compensatory Habitat SAC, similarly the River Dever will become the River Test Compensatory Habitat SAC.

The city council is working with our HRA consultants, and we have appointed an air quality consultant to undertake an assessment of road impacts within 200m of the compensatory habitats site. Our consultant is due to finish the air quality assessment by the end of January 2025. We will then need to agree the outcome of this air quality assessment with Natural England (this will take at least 2 weeks). The Council will then be in a position to update the Statement of Common Ground with Natural England and intention is to also agree a further Addendum to the HRA with Natural England.

When will this be available?

Whilst we are in the hands of the availability of Officers from Natural England, we will be pressing them to agree these documents hopefully, by the **end of February 2025**.

Policies Map

You will note that in the Schedule of Proposed Modifications (SD14a) that PM 163 states '*Revise policy map to remove shopping frontages and identify Primary Shopping Areas in line with Policy E3 and Policy E7*'. We have now identified that this Proposed Modification only applies to Winchester Town where the extent of the shopping area was not defined on the Policies Map. Officers are in the process of mapping the extent of the Primary Shopping Area for Winchester Town.

We have also identified that the site boundary of Land west of Courtenay Road (Policy W4) needed to be drawn to exclude part of the Barton Meadow Nature Reserve. This would be an additional Proposed Modification that we would like to put forward for consideration at the Local Plan examination (PM166).

Our intention is to produce these as a standalone documents for the examination but if you have any specific views on this approach, please can you be so kind as to let us know.

When will this be available?

The extent of the Primary Shopping Area in relation to Winchester Town and the amended boundary to Courtenay Road (Policy W4) will be submitted to the Programme Officer to upload to the Examination website by **Wednesday 22 January 2025**.

Self Build Register

The city council has published the Authorities Monitoring Report 2024 -2025 (ED03a and ED03b). It has subsequently come to our attention that there was an error with the number of permissions granted for self and custom build properties in the AMR (page 9). We are now finalising our work on a Self Build Position Statement which was referred to in paragraph 2.6.3 in the AMR.

When will the erratum to the AMR and the Self Build Position Statement be available?

The erratum to the AMR will be submitted to the Programme Officer to upload to the Examination website by **Wednesday 22 January 2025**.

The Self Build Position Statement will be submitted to the Programme Officer to be upload to the Examination website by **Wednesday 29th January 2025**.

Hearing Sessions

Thank you for confirming that the hearings are likely to take place in a number of stages and it appears likely that the majority of the hearing sessions could be conducted over a period of two weeks, with a few extra days in reserve days to allow for any over run.

In terms of timings, whilst we fully appreciate that this is the subject of your availability, if the two weeks around Easter could please be avoided that would be greatly appreciated as some of my team will have child care responsibilities then and we suspect that others who wish to participate in the examination may also encounter the same. If it were at all possible therefore to bring forward the 1st week of hearings to before Easter that would be most helpful.

I trust that the above answers all of your questions but please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further clarification on any of above matters.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Fox

Strategic Planning Manager

16 January 2025