

**Examination of the Winchester District Local Plan 2020-2040 - Hearing Statement
on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land - ANON-AQTS-32TT-6
Springvale Road, Kings Worthy**

**Matter 2 – Spatial strategy and distribution of development Policies SP1, SP2, SP3, H1, H2, H3,
and E1 and E2**

Issue: Whether the spatial strategy and distribution of development is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

- 1. The Settlement Hierarchy Review (2024) scores settlements and groups them which provides the settlement hierarchy in the District. Is the methodology used robust and the outcomes accurate? Is the distribution of development between the tiers of settlements justified and how has it been established?***

Overall, the District has the capacity to accommodate a greater number of dwellings than planned for to align with a higher housing requirement, as set out in our response to Matter 4 which concludes that the plan should make provision for higher numbers overall, and the comments regarding housing distribution below should be read in that context.

As drafted, Policy H3 splits the 3,825 homes apportioned to the Market Towns and Rural Areas (MTRA) into commitments and new allocations spread across the settlement hierarchy, namely the five market towns, five larger rural settlements, five intermediate settlements, and the remaining rural area. The five larger rural settlements are Colden Common, Denmead, Kings Worthy, Swanmore and Wickham.

Policy H3 proposes new allocations of 610 homes to the five larger rural settlements. The table on page 389 of the Draft Plan states that each of these settlements were asked to identify new sites for 90-100 homes – at most this would add up to 500 new homes, not 610.

The 610 total proposed allocation figure is skewed because it includes an allocation of 200 dwellings at Knowle (Policy KN1 – Ravenswood). Knowle is a small settlement in the rural area of Wickham Parish, not at Wickham. This undermines the spatial strategy which bases housing distribution on the sustainability of settlements, not parishes. There is also uncertainty around the deliverability of KN1. Despite an application for 200 dwellings being submitted in June 2018 (ref. 18/01612/OUT), planning permission has yet to be granted. As such, there is no clear evidence that homes will be delivered at the site and it does not therefore meet the definition of deliverable within Annex 2 of the NPPF. It should not be relied upon to meet the housing needs of the larger rural settlements.

Of the remaining 410 dwellings, only 290 will deliver open market and affordable housing. This is because the 120 dwellings at two allocations in Kings Worthy (KW1 and KW2) are for older persons housing.

We submit that the Plan should be amended so that its allocations better reflect its spatial strategy. The 200 home allocation at Knowle should be deducted from the larger rural settlements total, leaving 410 dwellings. To help address this shortfall, we suggest that a new greenfield allocation of land for 250 homes at Land at Springvale Road, Kings Worthy (ref. KW05) is included in the Plan.

As set out in our Regulation 19 representations, site KW05 scored higher in the Integrated Impact Assessment than those sites allocated in the Draft Plan at Kings Worthy. KW05 offers the opportunity to provide high quality open market and affordable housing on a site which has no significant constraints and lies adjacent to the settlement policy boundary. As such, it should be allocated for development to help address the

imbalanced distribution of housing across the District identified above and the higher overall housing requirement.

2. *Is the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy as set out in Strategic policy SP2 justified as an appropriate strategy, taking account of reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence?*

Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land (TWSL) support the principle of the Draft Plan's spatial strategy for distributing housing across a hierarchy of settlements based on their relative sustainability. However, the Plan fails to achieve that for the reasons set out below.

The distribution proposed in the Draft Plan is unevenly weighted in favour of focusing the majority of new development in urban areas. This includes large brownfield sites in central Winchester which are likely to be slow to come forward and offer reduced levels of affordable housing. Of the 15,115 dwelling suggested requirement (which we contend should be substantially higher), 11,290 (75%) are either in Winchester Town (5,640) or in the South Hampshire Urban Areas (Newlands, West of Waterlooville and Whiteley) (5,650). That leaves just 4,250 (25%) to be accommodated in the Market Towns and Rural Area (MTRA) which, as set out in the table contained in Policy H3, comprises 12 settlements along with the remaining Rural Area. This pattern of development is likely to lead to a growing concentration of services in the existing, larger, urban areas to the detriment of investment in the settlements across the rest of the District (the MTRA). Over time, this will lead to negative impacts on the vitality and viability of the MTRA with associated detriment to the quality of life of those living there both now, and in the future, contrary to the 'Living Well' objective of the Draft Plan which seeks to "Deliver inclusive communities with a range of services and infrastructure".

This pattern of growth is also unsustainable because the likely gradual degradation of rural services will lead to a high number of people travelling to the larger urban areas to access services and facilities. This will give rise to an increase in the number of vehicles on the road with associated localised effects on air quality, ground water quality and ecology. It will also lead to less socially cohesive communities, as people will be less likely to venture out if there are reduced services to access.

An increase in the housing requirement of the MTRA's as a result of increasing the Plan period, accounting for unmet needs and a suitable buffer, would lead to far more sustainable pattern of development across the District and provide the population to support existing and future services in the less urban / rural locations. It is therefore essential to allocate a greater number of sites within the MTRA to even up the balance.

3. *Is the proposed distribution of housing and other development supported by the evidence in the SHELAA, settlement hierarchy, and IIA, and will it lead to an appropriate pattern of housing and economic growth?*

No. The proposed distribution of housing fails to recognise opportunities for the allocation of suitable sites in the Market Towns and Rural Areas to meet the housing needs of the district and help sustain the vitality and viability of the rural settlements.

Kings Worthy is categorised within the larger rural settlements tier of the settlement hierarchy and, accordingly, it is very well placed to accommodate new development. Kings Worthy has a wide range of existing facilities including 3 no. convenience stores, a pre-school, a primary school, a daily bus service providing services to Winchester and, by effect, onward linkages to high order locations via the train station, a GP surgery, employment opportunities, recreational facilities including children's play equipment and other community facilities (church, 2 no. public houses) and other local facilities such as sports therapists, acupuncture, pilates coaching and a wellness facility.

Geographically, Kings Worthy functions as an extension of Winchester and is well placed to provide housing within easy commuting distance to support the economy of Winchester itself as the highest order settlement

in the District. As set out above, the bus services and, by inference, the connection to the train station, also provide sustainable connections beyond both Kings Worthy and Winchester.

Kings Worthy is therefore perfectly placed to accommodate additional open market and affordable housing to support and bolster existing facilities to the benefit of existing and prospective residents.

My client's site at Springvale Road (KW05) is a high quality site, in a sustainable location capable of providing much needed housing and open space in a settlement well positioned to accommodate housing numbers to contribute towards provision in Winchester as a key settlement but also within the District as a whole.