

WINCHESTER LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION HEARING STATEMENT MATTER 8

Prepared by Pro Vision on behalf of VIVID Homes

April 2025

WINCHESTER LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION HEARING STATEMENT MATTER 8
PROJECT NO. 51739

PREPARED BY:

JAMES ILES, MRTPI
DIRECTOR

CHECKED BY:

DATE:

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PRO VISION

THE LODGE
HIGHCROFT ROAD
WINCHESTER
HAMPSHIRE
SO22 5GU

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Issue: Whether the proposed housing site allocations in MTRAs would be justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

Policy DEN1 Denmead Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area

1. Denmead Parish Council is updating its Neighbourhood Plan at present. When is the Neighbourhood Plan expected to be 'made'? What is the evidence that it will come forward in an appropriate and timely manner?

1.1 On behalf of VIVID Homes and its interest in Denmead, we have been engaging with the neighbourhood plan process. We have raised concerns regarding fundamental elements of the evidence and process behind the emerging new plan, including the rejection of any available sites, including Site DE22 (Land South of Forest Road), encroaching into the adopted Settlement Gap between Denmead and Waterlooville.

1.2 We intend to comment further under Matter 14 (Policy NE7 Settlement Gaps).

1.3 We are aware that there are other stakeholders that have concerns about the evidence base for the new plan. There is real prospect, therefore, of delays or other complications with its progress.

1.4 Even if it does progress, it will soon be out of step with the higher level plan, noting the need for early review in the context of the revised Standard Method.

2. What is the evidence to justify an approach to designate an additional site/sites in the Neighbourhood Plan? What is the evidence to justify the housing target of 100 additional dwellings and would this ensure that development is directed to the most sustainable settlements?

1.5 Please refer to our Matter 5 (Question 6) response which has direct relevance to this question as well, including addressing the strategy at Denmead.

1.6 There is clearly justification for new allocations at Denmead in terms of need (locally and unmet needs from neighbours), availability of land, and sustainability (as a Larger Rural Settlement in the hierarchy, it is recognised as having a good range of local services and facilities).

1.7 In the context of the significant rise in local housing need in Winchester under the new Standard Method, the danger of the submitted strategy is that the Denmead Local Plan is 'locked in'¹ to a capped figure of 100 homes when there is almost certainly much more available capacity in this sustainable Larger Rural Settlement (albeit we note that the significant uplift in local need could equate to the "significant change in circumstances" that would trigger re-examination of numbers at the Neighbourhood Plan examination²).

3. What is the evidence that there are suitable sites available for designation? Would this approach provide the necessary certainty for the development plan process? In taking this approach would the Plan accord with a Plan led approach?

1.8 Please also refer to our Matter 5 (Question 6) response, which has direct relevance to this question as well.

1.9 In summary, there is significantly more estimated capacity at Denmead than is being required by the Local Plan, which would allow for more plan-led development, and therefore, increasing the yield of affordable housing and other community benefits, and less reliance on ad hoc windfall development.

1.10 In summary, VIVID's interest is site DE22 (Land South of Forest Road). An established and well respected local provider of affordable homes across the region, VIVID is alarmed that the neighbourhood plan process has not even considered the suitability of the site, simply on the basis that it is within settlement gap – a Local Plan policy pool rather than environmental constraint (please also refer to our statement on Matter 14 Policy NE7 Settlement Gaps).

1.11 The opportunity for more affordable homes, potentially around 40, alongside the other community benefits we have set out in VIVID's vision for the site, including better connecting existing public space south of the village, securing a strong defensible buffer to discourage future coalescence, have apparently not even been contemplated by the plan makers.

4. What is the justification to phase development delivery until after 2030 and would this be justified by the evidence?

1.12 In the absence of brownfield land allocations at Denmead, the acute affordability challenge, and level of unmet needs from neighbouring authorities, especially those south east of district

¹ NPPF 2024 as amended (Para 14).

² NPPF (para 70).

(Portsmouth, Havant and Fareham), closest to Denmead, there is little if any justification to hold back suitable and available housing sites.

5. If the Neighbourhood Plan was not made in a timely manner, how would the housing shortfall be made up? Extant Neighbourhood Plan allocations have yet to deliver what is the evidence that they will deliver in the Plan period (28 dwellings)?

1.13 We note that there is a lack of a contingency in the Local Plan in the event that the Neighbourhood Plan does not progress or does not deliver in a timely manner.

1.14 An example of another relatively recent plan with a clear contingency is the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (policy H4)³. The Local Plan allows a set period of time for neighbourhood plans, otherwise will then support alternatives.

1.15 We note that there is still a shortfall in delivery of homes from the 2015 Neighbourhood Plan, and that the capacity of several of the sites, once tested through planning application⁴, has proven to be less than planned for.

6. Should policy DEN1 address off site infrastructure needs? Would it be necessary for the purposes of soundness to address the requirement to liaise with water and waste water providers?

1.16 In the absence of a general infrastructure policy, and instead, providing details of requirements in site allocation policies, it is an omission that there is nothing about off-site infrastructure in DEN1. That is not surprising given site allocations are being deferred to the neighbourhood plan process, so the Local Plan does not know where the infrastructure will be needed.

1.17 This situation further adds weight to the positive planning option of the Local Plan allocating some strategic sites at this Larger Rural Settlement to ensure that key infrastructure keeps pace with demand.

³ For further detail, please refer to VIVID's representation on Policy DEN1 at Regulation 19 stage.

⁴ NP Policy 2ii Tanners Lane; NP Policy 2iv Anmore Road.