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Planning Policy
Winchester City Council
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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Winchester District Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation

Vail Williams LLP has been instructed to submit representations on behalf of Sovereign Network Group (SNG) (formerly Sovereign Housing Association) in relation to the Winchester Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation. SNG is the landowner and prospective developers of the site known as Kings Worthy House and Kings Worthy Court, London Road, Kings Worthy, Winchester SO23 7QA (SHELAA ref: KW04).

SNG submitted representations to the Regulation 18 Consultation (attached) and it is not intended to repeat those here, suffice to say that the site remains to be available, deliverable and achievable for residential development of approximately 30 dwellings.

It is noted in the 2023 Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment that the site is considered to have a capacity of approximately 31 dwellings (at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare), which SNG endorses.

Officers may note that SNG has submitted a planning application for the redevelopment of the site for the demolition of Kings Worthy Court and redevelopment of 30 dwellings including the alteration/conversion of the Kings Worthy House with 6 apartments, associated car and cycle parking, landscaped areas including public open space, sustainable drainage measures, access and circulation roads (including retained vehicular access from Court Road) and associated works (reference: 24/00103/FUL).

SNG is in the process of negotiating the planning application with planning officers and consultees and expects to be able to commence development of the site in 2025.

It is noted that the Regulation 19 Local Plan does not propose to allocate the application site for residential development and the purpose of this letter is to object to that omission and request that further consideration is given to allocating the site for residential development for approximately 30 dwellings within the Local Plan.

The contents of the Regulation 18 representations still stand and should be taken into account alongside this letter. In summary the benefits of the site are as follows:

LISTEN

CARE

Values



INNOVATE

LEAD

- Site is on previously developed (brownfield) land and its development is encouraged in the NPPF.
- The site is in a sustainable location close to bus routes and local facilities.
- The proposed development would deliver housing but more importantly affordable housing which is need in Winchester. Indeed, the Council's website states that *"we are particularly keen to pursue S106, Additionality, land led and rural opportunities"*.
- The site would deliver at least 12 affordable homes (40% in accordance with Local Plan Policy), with the potential to increase to 100% with the application of Homes England Grant. This would help contribute towards overcoming Winchester's 'significant' affordable housing need with 1500 people on the housing list.
- The site would deliver biodiversity net gain well in excess of the 10% policy requirement.
- Retention of the majority of existing boundary screening on site.
- Retention and enhancement of Kingsworthy House (non-designated heritage asset).
- Improved permeability through the site.
- Provision of additional public open space.

The inclusion of additional smaller sites within the allocations is considered essential to provide delivery whilst the larger allocations, which typically take far longer than expected to materialise, progress through the planning system.

Furthermore, the revised NPPF standard method could see the housing requirement for Winchester rise by an additional 400 dwellings per annum. This will increase the pressure to provide more housing sites, particularly on previously developed land and at higher densities, still further.

The site's most recent use as office accommodation has ended due to the vacation of the last tenants. The buildings on site are not suited to modern office requirements and there is an abundance of good quality office space in the vicinity with the nearest being at Royal Court, Church Green Close, Kings Worthy with vacancies totalling approximately 52,000 sq ft. Prior to commencing the planning application for the redevelopment of the site, the site was marketed for sale and there was no interest from developers to redevelop for employment uses.

Given its location within a residential area, and the lack of interest from non-residential developers, it is considered that residential is the most appropriate and achievable use on the site.

It would appear from the SHELAA response, that the Council acknowledges the development potential of the site. As detailed in the previous responses the proposed redevelopment would be in accordance with the policies in the draft Local Plan.

To reiterate Sovereign is fully supportive of the residential development of the land at London Road (reference: KW04). The site is considered suitable for development as per Policy H3. There are no overriding constraints, and the site is available for development. The site will therefore provide a significant contribution to housing supply in Kings Worthy and Winchester as a whole.

We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the draft Regulation 19 Local Plan. We would be grateful to be kept fully informed of the progress of the Local Plan to examination and would be pleased to participate in the relevant hearings.

If the Council requires any further additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, we look forward to receiving confirmation that these representations are duly made.

Yours faithfully

