

# **Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy**

**Advisory Meeting with PINS  
27 April 2012**

**June 2012**





## Winchester City Council advisory meeting with PINS Friday 27 April 2012

Peter Burley - Chief Planning Inspector PINS (PINS)  
Steve Tilbury - Corporate Director WCC  
Steve Opacic - Head of Strategic Planning WCC  
Howard Bone - Head of Legal Services WCC  
Jenny Nell - Principal Planner WCC  
Tim Richings - LDF Lead South Downs National Park

PINS explained purpose of the meeting was to explore compliance of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (the plan) with the NPPF published in March, but not to assess the soundness of the Plan as this would be for the examining Inspector to consider in detail. PINS reinforced Government's emphasis on the plan led system with the need to plan positively to meet development needs which are evidence based. CLG had advised that where at all possible plans should continue to move forward and that, provided LPAs have evidence and justification for their approach, and confidence in their compliance with the spirit of the NPPF, then they should press on.

WCC outlined the Council's approach, with Local Plan Part 1 setting out the development strategy with strategic allocations and key development management policies, with a Local Plan Part 2 to follow with greater policy detail and the allocation of non strategic sites. PINS confirmed that this approach was acceptable subject to the Part 1 document setting out sufficient justification and explanation.

### Housing Matters

PINS highlighted the need for the plan to be more explicit in terms of how and when housing sites would be delivered and how the plan would deliver the housing needed over the plan period. Of particular importance was demonstrating the ability of the plan to respond to changes in circumstance, for instance to encourage the delivery of housing if external conditions were unfavourable.

#### Action for WCC:

- need to consider how delivery performance would be monitored and the action that would be taken to improve performance if necessary (set out specific monitoring indicators to include in AMR). Include a housing trajectory in the plan and policies to be more flexible to deal with unforeseen changes during the plan period
- provide evidence to justify WCC position that the authority is not 'persistently underperforming' and therefore does not fall into the category of LPAs which should provide 20% additional available and deliverable sites (it was confirmed that the additional 5% or 20% relates

- to the amount of housing brought forward during the earlier part of the plan period, not to the overall housing requirement set in the Plan).
- in terms of the strategic allocations need to be much clearer as to the infrastructure required for these to be delivered and specify such requirements in policy – what is needed to bring forward the sites, funding availability and at what stage of the development the infrastructure is needed. Whilst detail must be included in a background paper as a minimum PINS suggest key issues to be set out in policy. Also refer to phasing to ensure that the site is able to respond to market demand (inc triggers for release of certain aspects of infrastructure), although it was noted that the Plan does not seek to phase the strategic sites. Need to consider what happens if the infrastructure does not come forward – is there a plan B if the Inspector finds a problem with a key site or if circumstances change and if not, why not?

### Employment and Retail Matters

PINS advise that the plan is not clear about amounts and locations of employment land to be provided in the plan period. Policies CP8/9 need to refer to both allocated and existing sites and the need for flexibility to be able to deal with rapid changes in the economy if required. The policies need to be more explicit in terms of what they are trying to achieve. In terms of retail requirements PINS advise that the amount of retail floorspace should be specified in policy and for its delivery strategy to be more explicit.

#### Action for WCC:

- consider producing a background paper to clarify amount/type of employment land and the strategy for its delivery.
- re-assess details of policies CP8 and CP9 to refer to retention of existing and allocated sites and the need for flexibility
- refer in key strategic policies to the amount of employment and retail growth planned for – how this will be expected to be delivered to ensure that this is meeting the needs of the area.

### Duty to Co-operate

PINS advise this is a two part test. The legal test of compliance with the duty requires evidence that the authority has made reasonable efforts to co-operate with its neighbours and those organisations set out in the regulations. The soundness test is different because if evidence shows that there is a 'need' for something but it can't be provided within WCC's plan then agreement will need to be reached that it will be provided elsewhere by a neighbouring authority.

#### Action for WCC:

- update draft Duty to Co-operate Statement and prepare 'common ground/position' statements where possible.

### Specific Policy Advice

PINS advise that Policy WT3 (Bushfield Camp Opportunity Site) is likely to be very carefully scrutinised by a Plan Inspector.

Policy CP5 Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. PINS advise that it seems sensible in Winchester's position to progress Local Plan Part 1 without a G&T pitch target or allocations, but to treat this like another housing policy and to set out in the supporting text (timescales and processes) how WCC is taking matters forward i.e. criteria based policy in the plan as an interim measure with more details and targets in Local Plan Part 2. Also need to address matter of rural exception sites for gypsies and travellers. Some elements of the policy seem restrictive or unclear when compared to the revised guidance and may therefore need amending to ensure compliance.

Policy CP4 Affordable Housing on Exception Sites to Meet Local Needs. Consider amending supporting text to refer to rural exception sites for gypsies and travellers. Some elements of the policy could be simplified and made clearer such as the section that deals with demonstrating the need for market housing.

### Other Matters

How should WCC handle consultation on proposed modifications/compliance with NPPF?

PINS advise that it will be for WCC to determine the best approach and whether to undertake consultation simultaneously with submission publication or not.

Should the plan include a policy on garden land?

– PINS advise this depends on how much of an issue this matter is locally and whether there is the evidence to support a policy approach. It could be included in Local Plan Part 2 if necessary.

Should the plan include an enabling policy for local green spaces?

Not necessary; NPPF is sufficient and this can be covered in Part 2 if required/necessary. Local green spaces concept is aimed at just that – not expanses of open countryside even if these have an important function as settlement gaps.

Should sustainability policy be extended to refer to improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings?

This can be covered in part 2 if required/necessary.

## Presumption in favour of development policy

PINS advise that incorporating explicit wording to demonstrate that the Plan incorporates the national policy presumption would be prudent. This should ideally be in the model form set out by PINS, or very similar, although it does not necessarily need to be a policy.