

## **New Alresford Town Council - Needs Summary Local Plan Part 2**

### **Introduction**

Over the last six years a plan for managing development and change within the whole of Winchester District, Local Plan Part 1 (LP1), has been evolving. The final version was adopted by Winchester City Council (WCC) in March 2013.

LP1 sets the framework for a more detailed plan, Local Plan Part 2 (LP2), which will highlight areas for development and tailor the general policies in LP1 to local circumstances.

This work is particularly crucial in New Alresford because the town is so small - about 1 sq. mile. The town is required to accommodate about 500 new homes between 2011 and 2031, support economic and commercial growth, and retain and improve local shops and community facilities. At the same time we must maintain and enhance the special character of the town and its setting.

The City Council's approach to this work has been to invite the Town Council to work with its residents and businesses to identify the future 'needs' of the town in a document to be submitted to WCC by the end of May 2013. These needs will be used to assess the various sites offered for development, and the suitability of each site to meet these needs.

Well over 100 people have worked in four 'Needs Assessment Groups': Infrastructure, Open Spaces, Housing, and Employment and the Local Economy. Group meetings were held between February and April 2013 and consisted of elected town councillors, residents and business owners from the Town.

This paper is a summary of the reports produced by each group. The full reports have been published on the Town Council website (<http://www.newalresfordtc.org.uk/townplan.php>). Additionally, you can either obtain or view a printed copy at the Town Council Offices or view one at the library in New Alresford.

On the 25th April 2013 an open event was organised from 2.00-9.00 where the outcomes of the four groups were exhibited and group members available to answer questions and queries. A plenary question and answer session was arranged from 8.00-9.00 and all attendees were invited to complete comments cards. All relevant comments have been considered, and in light of which, two changes have been made :

- Land amounting to 1 ha should be allocated to provide burial grounds.
- The suggested number of 1 and 2 bedroom properties for affordable housing have been combined as one total.

Space required is referred to in various parts of this paper in hectares (ha); one hectare is 10,000 square metres, i.e. 100m x 100m or 2.4 acres.

### **Infrastructure**

The Group looked at the facilities and services in the town to determine what additions or improvements would be needed as the town develops to ensure that it supports the residents and economic community.

## Education

- More pre-school places will be needed. Should an existing or new community building be developed it would be prudent to consider its use for a pre-school; high quality open space will be required.
- There is limited evidence to support an additional land requirement for Perins School and for the present it should be assumed that any additional needs will be met on the current site.

## Car parking in town centre

- Winchester City Council holds leases on existing Pay & Display car parks which run until 2020 (station car park) and 2035 (Perins car park). These car parks are felt to be essential if the retail centre is to survive and thrive and they should either be secured or replacement sites identified. Depending on the type and location of new homes, it may be necessary to identify and provide additional town centre parking.
- The current Pay & Display sites, at Perins, the Station, and Arlebury Park, should be the subject of a safeguarding policy to protect them for the future benefit of the community. NATC should also investigate registering a Community Interest in the Perins and Station car parks.

## Services

- Sufficient land is required, amounting to 1 ha to provide traditional and green burial grounds.
- Higher speed broadband is essential – for everyday use and, especially, those working at home. Some areas of the town will still suffer poor (<2 MBS) speeds after the delivery of superfast broadband to other areas.
- Land for provision of nursing and dementia care is required if we are to provide better facilities for elderly members of the population.
- Adaptable accommodation for those needing extra care in their own homes will be necessary if we are to allow for the growth in the over 75 population, which is forecast to double over the plan period. This is a housing issue which needs to be recommended if the town is to provide fully for the older age group

## Transport

- In order to improve foot and cycle movement, all developments should provide safe routes connecting all parts of the town for residents and visitors.
- In addition to those matters identified by HCC (see list on page 6 of full Infrastructure Needs Group report) it is necessary to:
  - Ease congestion on Sun Lane at the start and end of the school day, whilst imposing constraints to discourage the speeding that occurs at other times.
  - Widen footways on the south side of West Street to accommodate increases in pedestrian and buggy traffic.

- Provide foot and cycle tracks to the east and west of the town for recreational purposes.
- The land occupied by the Watercress railway line has the potential to address many of the needs of Alresford – parking, foot & cycle paths, and keeping open the option of a public rail service to the mainline rail network at Alton. It is important to ensure the land remains undeveloped should the Watercress Line cease to permanently to operate. NATC should register a community interest in this land.

### **Open Spaces**

The Group investigated the provision of open space in the town against the standards established in LP1. In considering how any identified needs might be met, the Group recognised the serious impediments to acquiring that land for open space and protecting it for posterity.

According to the open space standards set in LP1, Alresford has an existing shortfall in Open Space of 15.37 ha. Given planned population growth, the need in 2031 will be 20.37 ha. It is expected that a significant proportion of this additional 5 ha will be provided as part of the development of the larger housing sites, and it will be necessary to identify land to meet the remainder of the needed land as part of the Strategic Housing Land Area Assessment (SHLAA). Specific suggestions for satisfying the general requirement include:

- One or more allotment sites - 0.5 ha in total
- A dedicated cricket ground that could also provide facilities for runners - 1.5 ha
- Assuming rugby pitches are completed in the near future there will be a need for facilities particularly for youth rugby and mini-rugby purposes - 2.0 ha
- Additional tennis courts - 0.5 ha in total
- Further housing development will require new equipped Children's Play areas
- A BMX Park.

### **Housing**

The Winchester Local Plan Part 1 sets a housing requirement for Alresford of 500 additional dwellings in the period April 2011 until March 2031, of which some 79 have already been built or have planning permission.

The Local Plan requires that at least forty per cent of all new dwellings (roughly 170) should be affordable, either social rented or intermediate affordable.

It is projected that the average size of households will fall to just over 2 people per household during the plan period and that the numbers aged 75+ in the town could double over the next fifteen to twenty years.

In the light of evidence, the Group concluded that:

- around half the need for housing over the next twenty years will be for small dwellings (one and two bedroom)

- Of the smaller dwellings, the general consensus was that people prefer two-bedroom rather than one-bedroom dwellings
- Around half for larger dwellings (three bedrooms plus)
- There will be a need for a comprehensive sheltered/nursing facility.

This equates to approximately the number of new houses shown below:

Number of Bedrooms	Market Housing	Affordable Housing			Overall Total
		Social Rented	Intermediate (shared equity)	Total	
1/2		55	25	80*	80
2	100			[100]	100
3+ #	110	60	30	90	200
Sheltered	40				40
Total	250			170*	420
		* Will also include sheltered housing			

# Current assumptions are that only a small percentage will be four bedroom or more

Accommodation for the elderly has specific requirements and can be provided at a higher density than the equivalent sized general housing because of lower car parking requirements (especially if close to the town centre facilities) and smaller garden areas.

Although no specific sites were considered, the Group concluded that where redevelopment opportunities arise within or adjacent to the town centre, any scheme should achieve the highest density compatible with policies for conservation and enhancement in order to support the economic viability of the retail centre.

The present assumption is that no more than 56 dwellings can be provided on brownfield sites within the current settlement boundary. Sites beyond the current town centre should be developed at a density of 30 per ha.

If industry re-locates, that would provide significant brownfield sites close to the town centre, in an ideal position for higher density development.

### **Employment and the Local Economy**

The Group has investigated the current employment opportunities in the town, including retail, tourism, professional, commercial and industrial. Currently some 38% of the existing population also works in Alresford, excluding teleworkers and home-based businesses (a further 9% or so). Given the expected population growth over the plan period, opportunities would need to be provided for the creation of 200 or so additional jobs to maintain a similar proportion. This will retain the characteristics of Alresford as a working market town.

It was concluded that:

- There is a need to find sites of between 1.5 and 3 hectares for new business/commercial parks to provide the opportunity for businesses to remain or locate in Alresford, and secure some of the extra jobs required. Where new sites are considered for commercial activity, careful planning will be necessary to prevent the current inconvenience arising from access for large vehicles, and employees parking on residential streets.

- New or replacement employment sites will need to provide energy efficient adaptable buildings, with appropriate access to the road network, secure power supplies, and sufficient land area to meet business related and staff parking needs.
- High speed high resilient data communications are essential to support existing businesses, and attract new employers to the town. Such provision could also address the broadband needs of the town, and villages, on a subscription basis.
- No significant additional retail space is needed.
- Tourism forms a significant and growing part of the local economy but considered that further development would need to balance the needs of residents and visitors.

### Land Requirements

The approximate land requirements over the period to 2031 can be summarised as follows:

Housing *	14 ha
Commercial	3 ha
Open Space – new development	5 ha
Open Space – existing population	15 ha
Burial ground	1 ha
Total	38 ha

\* Assuming 400 houses are to be built at a density of 30 houses per hectare beyond the town centre and at higher densities in the centre.

Landowners have already submitted various proposals to the City Council, the SHLAA sites, and these and any others that may seem appropriate will be objectively considered by Town and City Council with a view to devising the best possible plan for the town that not only meets the needs identified but respects the character of the town.