

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2

Report of Wickham Proposed Development Strategy Consultation Jan – Feb 2014

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Winchester City Council's Local Plan will set planning policies and allocate land for future developments. It is being written in two parts. Part 1 was adopted in March 2013. This sets out the key planning policies for the District for the period 2011 - 2031. For the settlement of Wickham this means a requirement for 250 dwellings to be built in the village, as well as providing for other development needs identified by a range of organisations including the City and County Councils, Parish Council and infrastructure providers.

1.2 During 2013, Council officers have worked with Wickham Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (NSPG) (a subcommittee set up by Wickham Parish Council, to work on the Local Plan Part 2 on their behalf), to determine the specific development needs of Wickham. The conclusion was that, taking account of the expected capacity of the settlement, an additional 205 new homes need to be built outside of the existing settlement boundary, to ensure the target of 250 new homes is met. A range of other needs were identified (including improvements to infrastructure and open space provision) and are set out in the 'Wickham Needs Assessment for Local Plan Part 2' (July 2013)

1.3 In September 2013, a workshop was held with the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group to determine the spatial development strategy for Wickham. This involved assessing all the sites which have been put forward for development outside of the settlement boundary (see appendix 1) against the evidence which has been gathered for the area by Winchester City Council officers and NSPG. In addition to the assessments prepared by WCC officers, the meeting also used a series of principles developed by the NSPG:

- Priority should be given to sites against the current village boundary/built environment, to support maintenance of our compact village environment and surrounding countryside
- The total number of dwellings to be built outside the current village boundary should be accommodated over 3 – 4 sites, in smaller numbers
- To maintain and enhance our much valued rural nature, rather than allowing development to detract from the rural environment, all development should be realistically and actively managed to achieve this. The principles are to:

1. use sites that are relatively hidden and do not detract from the landscape of Wickham and any far reaching views on routes into or out of our village
2. provide increased areas of native hedgerows and trees and areas of meadow
3. use effective screening.

1.4 Through this assessment process, three potential housing development areas (covering 5 sites) were identified with scope for various combinations of development on one or more site (sites 1908, 1909,1910, 2438 and 2488). WCC officers and NPSG representatives met with the site promoters (outlined in more detail on board three of Appendix 2) to clarify what each site could offer.

2.0 **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR WICKHAM**

2.1 The resulting proposed development strategy for the village was as follows:

- Land east of Winchester Road (WCC reference 1909) -125 dwellings
- Land at 'The Glebe', Southwick Road (WCC reference 2438) - 80 dwellings (on the southern part) and public open space (on the northern part)
- Land east of Mill Lane – sports pitches

2.2 Board 3 of Appendix 2 shows the location of each of these sites and provides further details of how these sites were selected.

Local Plan Part 2 Consultation Exercise 17 January 2014–28February 2014

2.3 An informal public consultation took place on the proposed development strategy between 17 January and 28 February 2014.

2.4 To help explain the rationale for the proposed strategy, an exhibition was held at Wickham Community Centre on 29 January between 2 – 8pm and representatives from the NPSG, Wickham Parish Council and Winchester City Council were available to discuss the proposals. The event was well attended with 160 signing an attendance register and many others attending but not leaving their details.

2.5 During the consultation period, a comment form was available which asked whether respondents agreed with the strategy, and if so what are the most important elements to achieve. If they disagreed with the proposed sites they were asked for the best alternative deliverable solution. A further question asked for suggestions on where to locate a travellers' site. A copy of the form is included in Appendix 4. The comment form was available to download and complete on WCC's website and paper copies were available at Wickham Community Centre and Winchester City

Council offices. Alternatively other written comments were accepted by email and post.

- 2.6 Both the consultation and exhibitions were advertised by Wickham Parish Council in a number of ways, including the distribution of a leaflet (see appendix 4) to every household in the parish, and on Wickham Parish Council's website via a link to exhibition details on Winchester City Council's website.

Analysis of responses

- 2.7 A total of 66 responses were received. 63 were responses from individuals, and three responses were received on behalf of site promoters: Bewley Homes (site 1909), Bloor Homes (site 1908) and Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance (site 2348). Both Bewley Homes and the Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance supported the approach.
- 2.8 This section sets out the results of the consultation. For questions 2 – 5 the number of responses to an issue is shown in brackets. Please note that not everyone replied to each question, and many made several comments to each question. Bloor Homes submitted a detailed response which did not support the proposed strategy, and their comments are summarised separately at the end of this section (their response is included in the totals below for question 1).

Q1. Do you think the proposed development strategy for Wickham is the best way of providing for the needs identified at Wickham over the next 20 years?

Yes – 61% No – 39% (5 respondents did not answer this question)

Q2.What do you think are the most important elements to achieve

- Ensure adequate infrastructure to resolve drainage, sewage and flooding issues including new Pumping Station - (38)
- Traffic management /congestion / flow - (17)
- Keep new development as close to existing as possible to ensure Village remains compact with good access to all amenities (13)
- Parking issues - (10)
- Minimise impact on landscape / protect countryside - (10)
- Provide adequate affordable housing (4)
- Provide good mix of 2, 3 and 4 Bed Houses - (4)
- Provide Open Space - (4)
- Pedestrian Crossing on A32 or footbridge (1)

- Maintain the rural nature of the village (1)

Q3. Give your reasons for your answering no (to question 1). Comments should make reference to the planning criteria outlined on exhibition board 2

General comments

- Parking (3)
- Increase in traffic throughout the village (2)
- Want development spread over 3 – 4 sites (2)
- Wickham cannot support the current population (1) – increase in population will have a negative effect on the village
- Number of houses proposed is too high (1)
- No information provided on infrastructure provision (1)
- Need for sustainable construction/carbon footprint (1)
- New development will not address the needs of local people as people will move from outside the area (1)
- The village centre shopping does not need improving (1)

Site specific comments - 'land at Winchester Road' (1909)

Two people objected to the inclusion of this site, for the following reasons:

- Flooding issues (2) – will result in less natural drainage. This winter the site has had large surface lakes
- Increased congestion on Winchester Road (1)
- Concerns over pedestrian access (1)
- Light pollution (1) – low light levels are a key component of the make up of Wickham and needs to be addressed in the Local Plan.
- Noise pollution (1) – currently very low levels are a key component of the make up of Wickham and needs to be addressed in the Local Plan
- Invasion of privacy (1)
- Wildlife and bio-diversity (1)
- Allotments (1) – can these provide a barrier between existing housing and the new development?

Site specific comments - The Glebe Site (2438)

13 respondents stated that The Glebe Site should not be developed. The planning criteria referred to in these responses were:

- Flooding/Drainage (12). Comments included: there is a high water table so soak away or SUDS schemes will not work; development on the Glebe will result in surface water flooding existing houses; site referred to as a flood plain.
- The increase in traffic congestion (8), to be exacerbated further by the Welborne development (5) (WCC need to conduct an assessment on the impact of Wickham by the Welborne development).
- Separated from the main services and facilities by busy road (6) with poor access for pedestrians and cyclists
- Unsuitable access onto the site (4)
- Archaeology (3)
- Allocation this site will lead to further development on the site and beyond (2)
- Distance to shops, school and doctors' surgery (2)
- Landscape setting – on edge of countryside so more environmentally sensitive than site 1908 and 1909 (1)
- Will obstruct views of the church (1)
- Will impact on the Wickham/Welborne local gap (2)
- Will not maintain the compact and rural nature of the village (1)
- Tree Preservation Orders on site (2)
- Boundary of South Downs National Park is adjacent to Southwick Road (2)
- Wildlife/biological sensitive area (1)
- will ruin views from existing properties (1)
- will lower house prices.(1)

Comments on the number of sites proposed in the strategy

Four responses wanted the development to be over 3 or more sites. The reasons given for this approach include: the proposed strategy does not guarantee phasing;

Three responses preferred a combination of Sites 1908 and 1909 (see table below for the reasons given).

Detailed comments submitted on behalf of Bloor Homes include:

Site 1908 has not been assessed on the entirety of the available land. All sites should be assessed on a like-for-like basis. No detailed commentary given on how all the sites perform against the assessment criteria. The site promoter submitted their own assessment of the site against the criteria, including a revised transport assessment.

Bloor Homes response to the reasons why site 1908 was rejected by WCC

- 1) 'Significantly less well contained and more visually intrusive' – states this is not supported by WCC's landscape assessment. The southern half of Mill Lane is less sensitive than the Glebe. The impact on the SDNP is also shown as an issue for The Glebe
- 2) 'Potentially risks opening-up a wider area for development' – no more the case than any other site submitted (including site 1909 which originally also promoted site 1910. Bloor Homes have submitted a masterplan which shows the northern part of their site could be dedicated as open space.
- 3) 'Any Public Open space offer can be better provided elsewhere, better related to the village' - no evidence included in the consultation to support this point. The site can provide direct access to the allocation for a new recreational ground at Mill Lane.
- 4) 'The community does not want all the development in one location' - this is a general aspiration, which is to be expected in all settlements of this size and character. The consultation should objectively assess the site options in the context of Wickham's needs, and identify the most appropriate and sustainable strategy (para 182, NPPF). The Bloor consultation exercise has indicated that this is less of a concern than WCC and NPSG perceive it to be.
- 5) 'In isolation, Mill Lane is less suitable than the preferred allocation' – not substantiated by evidence. There is compelling evidence for the site to come forward with the neighbouring land at Winchester Road (no other realistic preferable site for around 125 dwellings).

Consultation undertaken by Bloor Homes.

Bloor Homes have an option for development at Mill Lane (WCC reference 1908). Their planning agents, Terrence O'Rourke's have made a representation to this consultation. As part of this representation, they have conducted their own public consultation, specifically targeted at asking questions on the merits of their site and also The Glebe. A copy of the leaflet that was distributed is reproduced in Appendix 5, as it was not submitted with their representation. Both Winchester City Council

and the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group have strong reservations as to the claim that this is an ‘independent local consultation’ for the following reasons:

- Not clear which residents were sent the leaflet, with reports from some local residents informing parish councillors that their addresses were not included in the distribution.
- Not clear if people responded to both the WCC/NSPG and Bloor Home’s consultations.
- The leaflet gives the impression that site selection is a choice between The Glebe and Mill Lane and does not acknowledge/explain the reasoning behind the proposed strategy, including the local community’s wish to spread development around the village.
- The leaflet focused on promoting the merits of site 1908, (including stating that the development would improve the drainage of surface water along Mill Lane, and assist in delivering improvements to the historic foul drainage system), so does not give a balanced assessments of all the sites which have been considered.
- The reports states that 72 people answered question 2 (asking if the person agreed with the reasons the Council had given for rejecting the Bloor Site as a preferred option for development) with 14 people agreeing and 58 people (80.5%) disagreeing. However, 13 of the 58 people who disagree stated that they wanted no development at all, so would presumably object to the Bloor’s site too.

Q4. What is the best alternative deliverable solution for Wickham? (bearing in mind that both 205 homes and the other needs outlined in the exhibition must be addressed).

The table below sets out a summary of the suggestions received.

Suggested site	Reasons given
Site 1908 - Mill Lane (9)	Meets all the criteria Closer to local facilities than The Glebe Less likelihood of flooding than The Glebe Adjacent to the proposed recreation facilities Adjacent to the settlement

Suggested site	Reasons given
	<p>boundary</p> <p>Able to provide pedestrian and cycle access to The Square and Doctors' surgery</p> <p>To build new housing next to more recent developments would have a more minimal impact than building on The Glebe.</p> <p>Accessible site from either end of the village.</p> <p>Closer to facilities than site 1909 and more suited as better to build new houses next to more recent development would have less visual impact.</p>
Site No. 1910 - Site 'B' off Winchester Road - (2)	Allow residents access to all amenities by foot or cycle without need to cross a main road
Site No. 2488 - Land off Titchfield Lane - (4)	<p>Suggests 50%.to be developed and remaining 50% to be rural buffer zone</p> <p>Road junction is heavily used and requires immediate improvement regardless of building.</p> <p>Plenty of space and easy/safe access to schools and medical facilities</p>
Site No. 2020 - Wickham Park Golf Club - (1)	It is adjacent to the settlement boundary and is closer to the square than any other site
Site No. 1908 and 1909 as one large development - Mill Lane and Site 'A' off Winchester Road - (3)	<p>Close to shops, schools and doctors</p> <p>Can be phased</p> <p>The two developments can be</p>

Suggested site	Reasons given
	<p>pooled together with the recreational facilities to the east of Mill Lane to provide pedestrian and cycle access to other parts of the village.</p> <p>Quieter side of the village with safer routes to school and play facilities.</p> <p>A single development will provide more funding from CIL etc allowing the present pipe work and pumping station to be replaced.</p>
Smaller Site at Glebe - (1)	-
Larger Site at Glebe - (1)	<p>It is lower in the village and will cause fewer additional drainage problems, Has established access/good new access possibilities.</p> <p>Clear support was given to this site in 2007.</p>
On proposed public open space (1)	Less chance of flooding
On Stilts at Winchester Water Meadows!! (1)	-

Q5. Do you want to suggest a site around Wickham for travellers which is separated from existing/proposed housing but still easily accessible to facilities and services in Wickham?

There were 46 comments on traveller sites of these 20 either had nowhere to suggest or simply didn't want any. The suggested sites are listed below with the number of people who suggested it in brackets:

- Site 296 (Grig Ranch) - (4)
- Site 295 - Land at Hilldale Farm, Titchfield Lane - (4)
- Green Space North of Mill Lane - (4)

- Mayles Lane - (4)
- Not in close proximity of Village - (2)
- Whiteley - (2)
- At or towards Knowle - (2)
- Off Tanfield Lane - (2)
- Site 2438 - alongside A32 at Glebe for easy access to road network - (2)
- Unauthorised Shedfield Site - (2)
- Park Place Pastoral Centre - (1)
- Welbourne Gap - (1)
- Blind Lane - (1)
- Southwick Road - (1)
- Wickham Common - (1)
- East or West of Frith Lane - (1)
- Site should be created in conjunction with the travelling community (1)

3.0 **KEY CONCERNS TO BE ADDRESSED**

3.1 It is clear from the consultation that the local community has several concerns regarding further development at Wickham and this section looks in more detail at the issues raised and how they can be addressed through Local Plan Part 2.

Flooding/drainage

3.2 It is recognised that flooding has been a major concern in Wickham for many years and that there is a strong view that the existing problems should be resolved before further development is allowed. The current problems include localised flooding at times of heavy rainfall, particularly in the area of Riverside Mews. These appear to result from surface water entering the foul drainage system, which cannot cope with the volume of water. There were also concerns expressed about the drainage of surface water from the proposed development sites.

3.3 Winchester City Council is currently seeking clarification from Southern Water and Hampshire County Council (the bodies responsible for foul and surface water drainage respectively) on how these issues should be addressed. It is recognised that the Wickham policies in Local Plan Part 2 will need to control development so as to ensure that it at least addresses its own drainage requirements without increasing

existing problems and, ideally, helps to resolve existing problems. The policy will be drafted to reflect these aims and the advice received from the responsible authorities.

Traffic

- 3.4 Hampshire County Council is the Highway Authority and did not object to the housing figure of 250 in Local Plan Part 1/not the proposed development strategy. A Transport Assessment undertaken of Local Plan Part 1, looking at the cumulative impact of development in and around the Plan area, and the 250 dwelling requirement for Wickham is now established in that Plan. Similarly, the Welborne development is now a commitment of the Fareham Borough Core Strategy.
- 3.5 Therefore, unless there are site-specific matters which prevent particular sites from achieving satisfactory access, general concerns about increases in traffic do not justify failing to plan for these levels of development. The transport impacts of the proposed sites have been assessed at a broad level and can be accommodated and this has also been demonstrated by transport consultants appointed by the promoters of both proposed sites. The site allocations in Local Plan Part 2 will include appropriate requirements for transport and access, and future planning applications will require a transport assessment.

Site Selection

- 3.6 From the responses to the consultation, there is clear support for land at Winchester Road (site 1909), with just two objections (3%) to the inclusion of this site (other than those not wanting any further development in Wickham). The largest single reason for people opposing the development strategy was objection to the development of land at The Glebe (13 people, 20%), although not all those opposing the strategy objected for this reason.

Alternatives

- 3.7 Similarly, whilst site 1908 was the alternative suggested by the largest number of those objecting to the strategy (9 respondents/14% suggested this site directly with 3 others suggesting it in combination with other land), this was not the only site suggested. All of the other sites suggested (except a suggestion for land in Winchester) have been assessed and rejected for the reasons set out in the consultation information and no new information has been submitted to change those assessments.
- 3.8 It is recognised that there are some planning merits to site 1908, which is why the site was included on the short list at the early stages of site assessment. The Bloor Homes response includes detailed reasons as to why they suggest their site should

be selected instead of The Glebe. These reasons are summarised below, with a response from Winchester City Council officers.

Criteria	Bloor Comment	WCC officer response
Is the site adjacent to the existing settlement boundary/built environment so as to maintain the compact nature of the village?	No – but the settlement boundary needs to be reviewed through Local Plan Part 2 to take account of development at Houghton Gardens, the Community Centre and doctors surgery	The Bloor comment acknowledges the site does not adjoin the settlement boundary and it does not perform any better than The Glebe site on this criterion, even when account is taken of recent developments.
Will it avoid concentrating development on one or two sites and assist with phasing of development?	No – if considered along with site 1909. Do not agree that the community wish for development to be dispersed across the village. Refers to paragraph 52 of NPPF which states <i>“the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for large scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities”</i>	The majority of responses to the consultation agreed with the proposed development strategy of having more than one site. The desire for a number of small sites was specifically mentioned by some respondents. The NPPF advice does not require the use of large sites (the reference to Garden City principles suggests it is aimed at very large-scale developments).
Is it well related and integrated with the pattern of development?	Yes – well related to the development at Houghton Gardens and the existing community cluster	Both sites 1908 and 2348 are on the edge of the village, adjoining existing development, and perform similarly on

Criteria	Bloor Comment	WCC officer response
		this criterion.
<p>Would development detract from the landscape of Wickham and surrounding area and important views?</p>	<p>No – WCC’s landscape sensitivity assessment considers site 1908 as being in the “least sensitive” category. The Glebe is considered “moderately sensitive”</p> <p>The Sustainability Assessment (SA) concludes that The Glebe is particularly sensitive to development as it forms part of the setting to the SDNP and part of the historic river valley crossing location, and that a large amount of screening would need to be incorporated to reduce the major negative effects identified for landscape.</p>	<p>Both sites 1908 and 2348 are in the lower landscape assessment categories, with 1908 being slightly less sensitive. In terms of landscape impact and effect on views, the landscape assessment shows that site 1908 is on rising ground below a ridgeline and is more likely to impact on views than site 2348 (southern part).</p> <p>The SA looks at The Glebe site as a whole, and not just the southern part which is being proposed for development. The need for screening would be incorporated into the policy wording, as would the requirement to provide the northern part of the site as open space, which will maintain or improve the setting of the SNDP (and Church). The SA also highlights that sites which do not adjoin the settlement boundary (including site 1908), “could be considered to lead to greater negative effects on the landscape</p>

Criteria	Bloor Comment	WCC officer response
		and soils than other Greenfield sites.”
Can it contribute to meeting other needs identified in Wickham?	Yes – a concept map option shared with WCC demonstrates the northern half of the site could be set aside for 3ha of informal and formal open space (more than at The Glebe). The site can assist in delivering pedestrian and cycle access to the new recreation area at Mill Lane.	<p>The proposed recreation area at Mill Lane is being provided without the need to allocate site 1908.</p> <p>The proposed allocation of the northern part of The Glebe will ensure the protection of the view across the open Glebe land identified in the Wickham Village Design Statement and provide a valuable open space well-related to the village. The land north of site 1908 is more isolated and less usable by comparison.</p> <p>The Glebe allocation will also contribute to the replacement of the Recreation Ground pavilion.</p>
Are the physical constraints on the site?	No. Flooding - the site is not in a high flood risk zone. However development to the north of the village has the potential to deliver a more comprehensive solution to local flooding issues elsewhere in the village. By contrast, The Glebe acts as a local attenuation area.	<p>The Glebe is not in or near flood zones 2 and 3. The SA states that “Development on site 2348 is considered to be more sustainable than the other sites”.</p> <p>The promoters of sites 1908 and 1909 have undertaken work to address surface water and drainage issues.</p>

Criteria	Bloor Comment	WCC officer response
		However the solution proposed was for largely separate systems for the two sites, with site 1908 more likely to increase pressure on the system in the area of Riverside Mews area.
Are there any national or local policy designations on the site?	<p>No.</p> <p>Archaeology – site 1908 falls into the same category as 1909 which is proposed as a housing allocation. The Glebe is categorised red in terms both heritage and archaeological impact.</p> <p>Agricultural land - site 1908 falls into the same category as 1909 which is proposed as a housing allocation.</p>	<p>Archaeology - the issues raised in the Historic Environment Assessment will need to be addressed through further investigations (which are underway) and through the Local Plan policy wording. The northern part of the Glebe is the most sensitive in archaeological terms and is proposed as open space.</p>
Is the site close to Wickham's facilities and services?	Yes - the site is closer to the main cluster of community facilities in the village, including the school than The Glebe.	Both sites 1908 and 2438 are a similar distance from Wickham village centre, which is the main focus of facilities and services. While site 1908 is closer to certain facilities (school, etc), The Glebe is closer to others (church, etc).
Is there good access to the site?	Yes – together with site 1909 access could be achieved from both Mill lane and Winchester Road.	Adequate access can be provided to both sites 1908 and 2438, which perform similarly on this

Criteria	Bloor Comment	WCC officer response
		criterion.
Would development maintain the generally open and undeveloped nature of the Welborne/Knowle/Wickham gap?	No impact on the gap. The Glebe site is closest to the gap and by virtue of a precedent for future development to the south and south-east, is most likely to indirectly affect the Gap in the future.	The Glebe is not situated in the Gap and would not extend the built-up area of the village any closer to Welborne. Both sites perform similarly on this criterion.

3.9 A number of suggestions were made as to possible traveller sites although it does not appear these have come from site owners. There is some preference for sites off of Titchfield Lane, but no clear indication of a community preference for any one site. Some respondents suggested site 295 (land north of Titchfield Lane), which the Steering Group also thought may have potential, but having contacted the land owner it became clear that the site would not be made available for traveller use.

3.10 Since the consultation exercise the City Council, along with some neighbouring authorities, has appointed consultants to undertake an assessment of traveller sites to inform Local Plan Part 2. The suggestions made through the consultation process will be passed to the consultant for consideration and draft policies will be included in the emerging Local Plan, as appropriate, for future consultation.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 A comprehensive consultation exercise was jointly undertaken by Wickham Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group and Winchester City Council. By delivering a leaflet to every household in the parish, it is considered that all local residents were aware of the consultation, and this was demonstrated by the number of people who attended the exhibition on 29th January. Given that only 24 objections were received to the proposed strategy (including Bloor Homes), out of all the households consulted (and the 160+ people attending the exhibition), it is considered that the consultation shows community support for the inclusion of the proposed development strategy in Local Plan Part 2.

4.2 The separate consultation undertaken by Bloor Homes claimed to receive a higher number of responses (93). However, as outlined earlier in this report, WCC officers and the NPSG have various concerns regarding this exercise and consider it more appropriate to take account of the results of their own consultation.

- 4.3 The main option for changing the proposed strategy would be to replace The Glebe site allocation with an allocation of land off Mill Lane, creating a large development area to the north of the village. Both sites perform similarly on several criteria, but the Mill Lane site rarely performs any better than The Glebe, and sometimes worse. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents supported the proposed strategy and allocation of the Mill Lane site would particularly conflict with the NPSG's aim, expressed again by several respondents, to avoid a single large development.

Recommendation

- 4.4 That the Parish Council supports the inclusion of the proposed development strategy as outlined in this report in Winchester City Council's Draft Local Plan Part 2, with the relevant policies in the Plan including appropriate requirements of development, especially in relation to drainage, transport and landscape.

**Head of Strategic Planning, Winchester City Council
Wickham Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group
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