

Winchester District Local Plan - Part 2

Wickham Development Strategy

Introduction

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 during the period 2011-2031
- Policies to maintain & improve shopping, services and tourism
- Measures to maintain & improve the balance between housing, employment and services

The City Council and Wickham Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (NPSG) are now working together to write Local Plan Part 2 which will show in detail how the policies in Local Plan Part 1 will be implemented. This includes allocating the necessary sites to meet the needs of the village over the next 20 years.

The purpose of this consultation is to explain both the work which has been undertaken so far and the reasons for choosing the development strategy shown later in this exhibition, and to ask for your thoughts on what has been proposed.

What is the Wickham Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (NPSG)?

The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (NPSG) is a sub-committee of and reports directly to, Wickham Parish Council. The Parish Council tasked the NPSG with drafting a Neighbourhood Plan and working with WCC in their preparation of the LPP2, to give local people a chance to shape development in the parish from 2011 to 2031. The purpose of the Steering Group is to develop and oversee a process that will either result in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Wickham or will result in the production of a Local Plan Part 2 by WCC that fully reflects the needs and views of the community of Wickham.

The vision is: "To protect Wickham as an attractive and prosperous rural community in which to live and work, that moves forward in a way that meets the community's needs and aspirations".



What has happened so far? - defining Wickham's needs

During 2013, Winchester City Council worked closely with the Wickham Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group to assess the needs of Wickham during the Plan period.

- In early 2013, Winchester City Council drafted 'templates' on housing, employment, and infrastructure, and asked NPSG to assist in filling them in.
- Between January and July the NPSG gathered lots of evidence on the needs of Wickham. They used a variety of sources including the existing Parish Plan and speaking to local community groups, schools and nurseries, infrastructure and service providers, estate agents and the Community Land Trust.
- A community event was held on 27 June 2013 which summarised the work completed so far and asked local residents for their opinions on how Wickham should address the needs identified.

The NPSG produced the Wickham Needs Assessment in July 2013, setting out its conclusions on local needs and preferences (the report can be viewed at www.wickhamparishcouncil.org)

Summary of Needs Assessment / Winchester City Council conclusions:

General principles for development:

- Maintain compact, rural nature of the village and surrounding countryside.
- For development outside the current village boundary priority should be given to sites against the existing village boundary.
- Give priority to brownfield sites within the settlement

Housing:

- 250 homes are required by Local Plan Part 1, with 44 permitted/committed already (at June 2013)
- 100 homes are needed for 'affordable housing' (below market prices/rents)
- Spread housing development over 3 - 4 smaller sites and through phasing
- Need for 'modest' housing overall with a good mix (housing suitable for 'downsizing' as well as family [3-4 bed] housing)
- Provide for share of District traveller accommodation needs (5-6 pitch site)

Employment/Economy

- Increase employment opportunities

Infrastructure

- Sewerage, drainage and flooding issues to be addressed
- Traffic management to mitigate heavy traffic
- Improve the A32/Southwick Road junction and links to Church
- Improve parking in the village centre
- Refurbishment/improvement of Wickham Square
- Retain/increase the Primary Shopping Area
- Improve Community Centre, Recreation Ground, Pavilion and Youth Club
- Improve community transport

Open Space

- There is a strong desire to enhance our "open space" for community use along with development
- Need to provide various types of open space:
 - Additional allotments (0.42ha)
 - Additional children's play space (0.54ha)
 - Provide additional sports ground (0.19ha) (land east of Mill Lane allocated in 2006 Local Plan)
- Improve the distribution of natural green space, sports grounds and parks and recreation grounds
- Provide green links to the Square
- Open up old railway line between Wickham and Knowle and improve footpath links

Many of the matters raised by the NPSG will be covered by Local Plan Part 2, such as allocating sites for identified needs, considering broad access arrangements and setting out policies for managing development. Other needs will be provided through different means, either by businesses, public bodies or voluntary organisations.

Not all of the needs identified necessarily require a site or land and it may not be possible to meet all of them. For example, most sites put forward by landowners are large sites (see Map 1), which means that spreading development over 3-4 sites would potentially release more housing land than is needed.

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What has happened so far? – assessment of all potential sites

We have assessed the capacity of Wickham to provide land for the further approximately 205 dwellings required by Local Plan Part 1 and the conclusion is that the existing settlement boundary will need to be redrawn to accommodate these homes (further details on the capacity assessment can be read in the 'Assessment Of Windfall Trends And Potential In Wickham' at www.winchester.gov.uk/lpp2sites).

Every year WCC publishes the 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' (SHLAA) which shows land being promoted by landowners/agents for housing development. All the sites submitted are shown on Map 1. These are the 'available' sites, which have been assessed against the needs and criteria identified.

As several sites were promoted for development, Winchester City Council and the NPSG have considered the merits of each site. The issues considered included:

- Is the site adjacent to the existing settlement boundary/built environment so as to maintain the compact nature of the village?
- Will it avoid concentrating development on one or two sites and assist with phasing of development?
- Is it well related and integrated with the pattern of development?
- Would development detract from the landscape of Wickham and surrounding area and important views?
- Can it contribute to meeting other needs identified in Wickham?
- Are there physical constraints on the site e.g. is it in a flood zone?
- Are there national or local policy designations on the site e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monuments?
- Is the site close to Wickham's facilities & services?
- Is there good access to the site?
- Would development maintain the generally open and undeveloped nature of the Welborne/Knowle/Wickham gap?

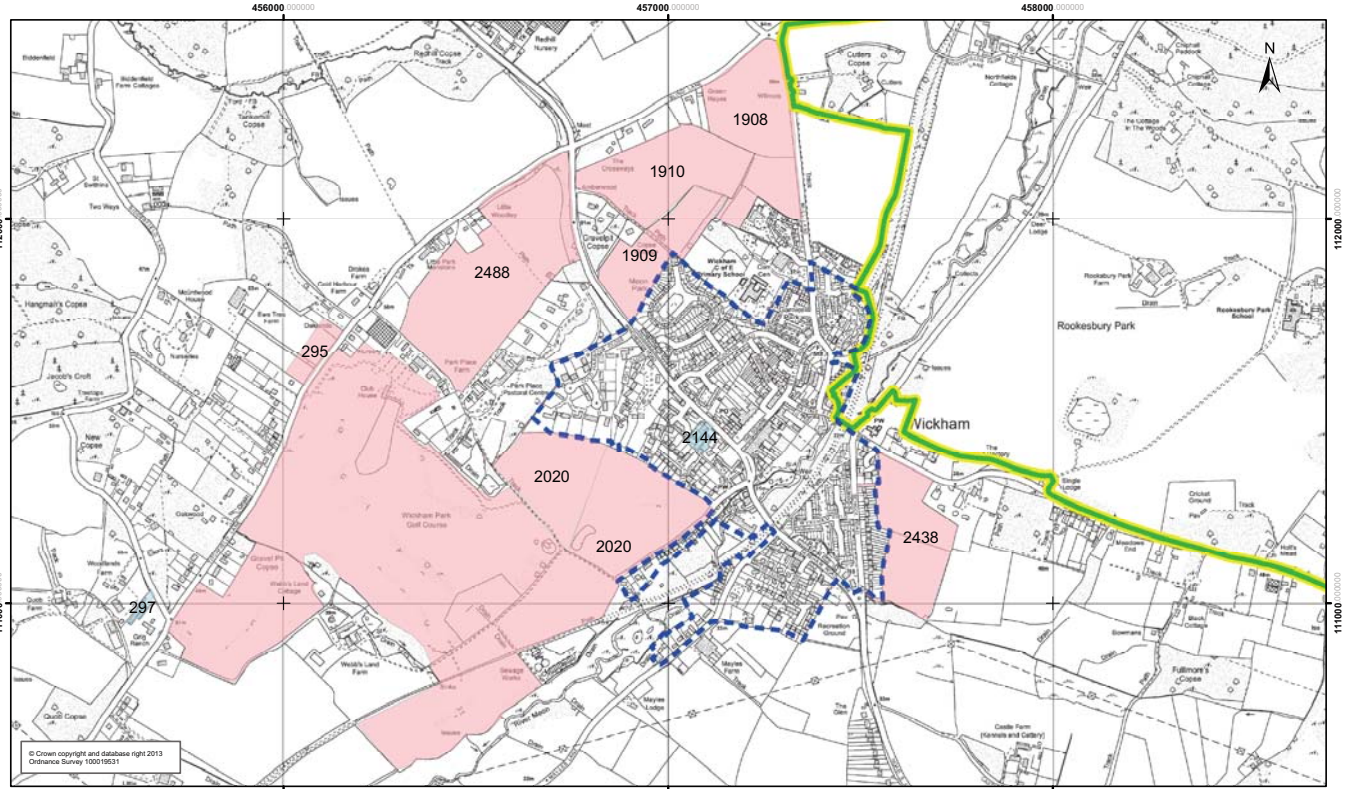
To assist with the assessments, a range of technical documents were written. These included:

- Initial site sieve
- Constraints maps
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
- Windfall Trends & Potential
- Open Space Assessment
- Historic Environment Assessment
- Transport / Accessibility Assessment
- Initial Sustainability Appraisal
- Traveller needs assessment

The maps and documents (right) are a sample of the assessments. Full details can be viewed at www.winchester.gov.uk/LPP2sites



Map 1: Submitted SHLAA sites



Local Plan Part 2 Sites Submitted showing sites no longer under consideration for one or more of the following reasons

- Sites which are under 0.3 hectares;
- Sites within the current boundaries of settlements listed in policy MTRA 3 of the Local Plan Part 1 (these sites may be able to be brought forward for development/ redevelopment under current planning policy);
- Sites which are distant from the settlements of Winchester Town, New Alresford, Bishops Waltham, Kings Worthy, Colden Common, Swanmore, Waltham Chase, Wickham, or Denmead;
- Sites within the South Downs National Park (if the site is adjacent to one of the settlements listed above then Winchester City Council may approach the National Park if it is considered that the site is more suitable for allocation than alternative sites outside of the National Park).

The other sites will be short-listed in due course to determine which should be allocated in Local Plan Part 2

The site selection has taken place in three stages. This section sets out the sites which were eliminated at each stage and the reasons why:

Stage 1: Initial sieving exercise

Rejected site: 297 - Land at Grig Ranch, Titchfield Lane

Reasons: Less than 0.3ha in size and distant from the settlement

Conclusion: Not suitable for further consideration as a housing allocation.

Rejected site: 295 - Land North of Titchfield Lane

Reasons: Highly sensitive in landscape terms
Poor accessibility to facilities/services and not adjacent to the existing settlement boundary/built environment.

Not well related or integrated with the pattern of development.

Conclusion: Not suitable for further consideration as a housing allocation.

Rejected site: 2020 - Wickham Park Golf Course

Reasons: This site is much larger than needed for the number of dwellings required, with no obvious subdivision and resulting in development being concentrated in one location.

Highly sensitive in landscape terms.

Most of the site has poor accessibility to facilities/services and is not adjacent to the existing settlement boundary/built environment.

Not well related or integrated with the pattern of development

Conclusion: Not suitable for further consideration as a housing allocation.

Rejected site: 1910 – land east of Winchester Road, south of Blind Lane
(promoted in conjunction with site 1909, east of Winchester Road).

Reasons: This site is larger than needed for the number of dwellings required (when combined with site 1909), resulting in development being concentrated in one location.

Highly sensitive in landscape terms.

Not adjacent to the existing settlement boundary/built environment (when considered on its own).

Conclusion: Not suitable for further consideration as a housing allocation, may have potential for recreation.

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Stage 2: Potential Site Options – Shortlisted Sites

This resulted in 3 potential housing development areas, with scope for various combinations of development on one or more sites. These are illustrated on Map 2.

Map 2: Potential Site Options

As the areas being considered for housing did not necessarily correspond with those sought by their site promoters, contact was made with the agents for each site. Each was asked to clarify how their site could be developed for the options described below.

1909/1908 – land east of Winchester Road and west of Mill Lane.

- Approximately 125 -150 dwellings (on the southern part of site 1908 and all of site 1909) accessed from Winchester Road.
- Retention and reinforcement of site boundaries.
- Provision of children’s play facilities on site and sports pitches on land allocated at Mill Lane.
- Provide/improve pedestrian and cycle access into the village centre.

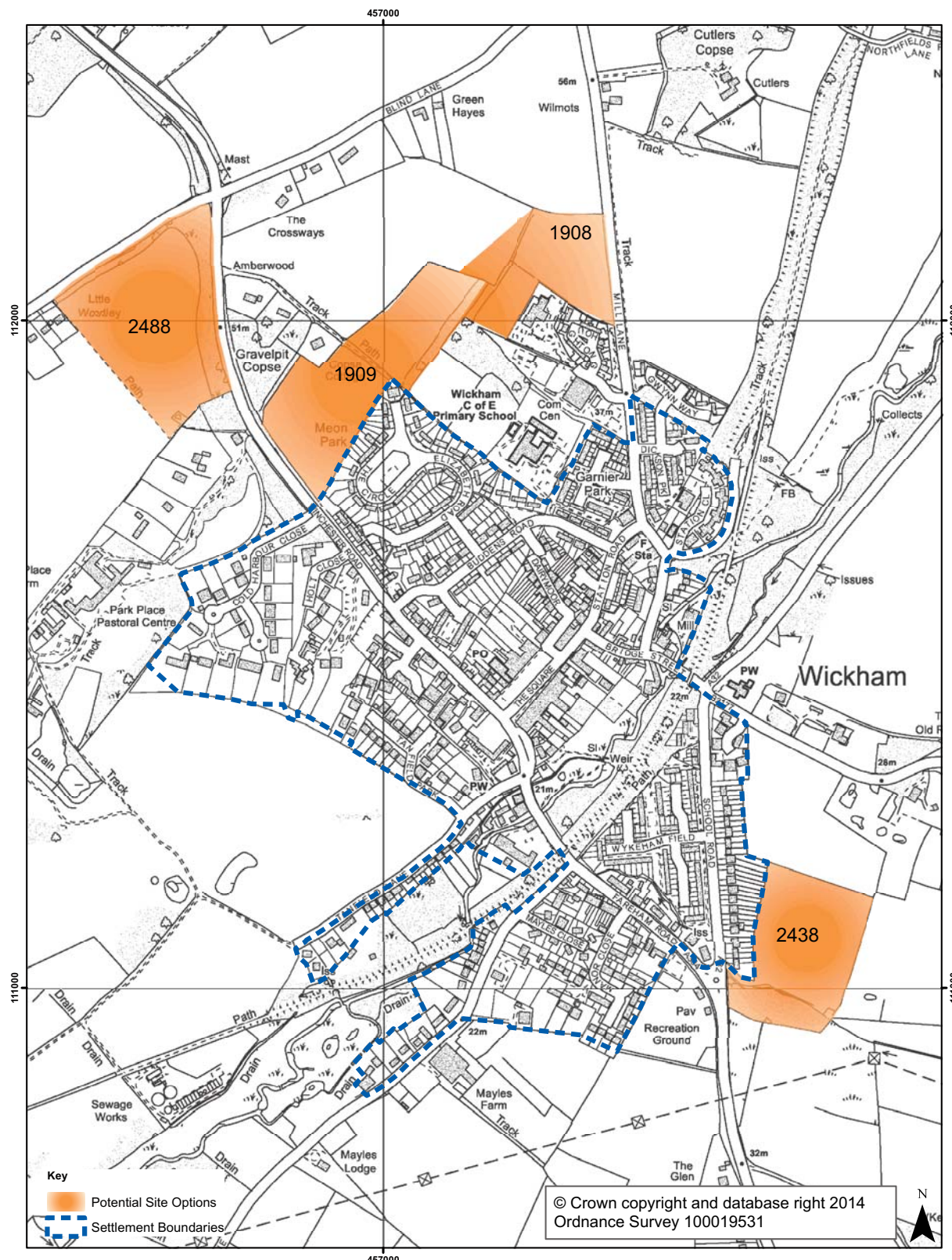
2438 – land at Southwick Road ('The Glebe'), southern part.

- Approximately 50 - 80 dwellings (on the southern part of site 2438) accessed from the A32.
- Improvement of the A32/Southwick Road junction.
- Retention and reinforcement of site boundaries.
- Provision of children’s play facilities on the site and informal open space/parkland on the northern area of land.
- Provide/improve pedestrian and cycle access into the village centre.

2488 – land at Titchfield Lane/Winchester Road, eastern part.

- Approximately 50 - 80 dwellings (on land comprising the north-eastern part of site 2488) accessed from Titchfield Lane.
- Improvement of the Titchfield Lane/Winchester Road junction.
- Retention and reinforcement of existing boundaries.
- Provision of children’s play facilities on site together with informal playing space.
- Provide/improve pedestrian and cycle access into the village centre.

Map 2 Potential Site Options



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Stage 3: The proposed development strategy for Wickham

Meetings were held with each of the site promoters, who were given the opportunity to clarify their proposals in the light of the Wickham Needs Assessment and the proposals put by WCC officers and the NPSG. Following these meetings City Council officers and the NPSG have concluded that the following sites (see Map 3) and development proposals best achieve the balance sought between the need for sites to meet planning criteria and meeting the community's needs and aspirations.

Proposed Allocation: Site 1909 – land east of Winchester Road.

Reasons:

- 'Least sensitive' in landscape terms.
- Adequate accessibility to facilities/services (applies to whole of sites 1909/1910, site 1909 only is better and close to School, Community Centre, etc).
- Adjacent to the existing settlement boundary/built environment and well related/integrated with the pattern of development. Well contained by existing natural features (capable of significant landscape reinforcement) and avoiding significant visual intrusion.
- Potential for phasing to avoid development all at one time.
- Offering to provide land and funding for sports pitches on land east of Mill Lane (3.5 hectares).
- Good access from Winchester Road, although some impact on trees.
- No significant physical or policy constraints, or impact on Welborne/Wickham Gap.

Conclusion: Site 1909 is suitable for 125 dwellings with access via Winchester Road in a location/form which minimises loss of trees, hedgerows and character. The retention and reinforcement of site boundaries is required, particularly along the northern edges. Provision of children's play facilities is required on-site, along with sports pitches to be laid out (with changing/parking facilities) on 3.5 hectares of land east of Mill Lane. Improvement of pedestrian and cycle access into the village centre using the existing footpath crossing the site (retaining rural character) and improvements on Winchester Road.

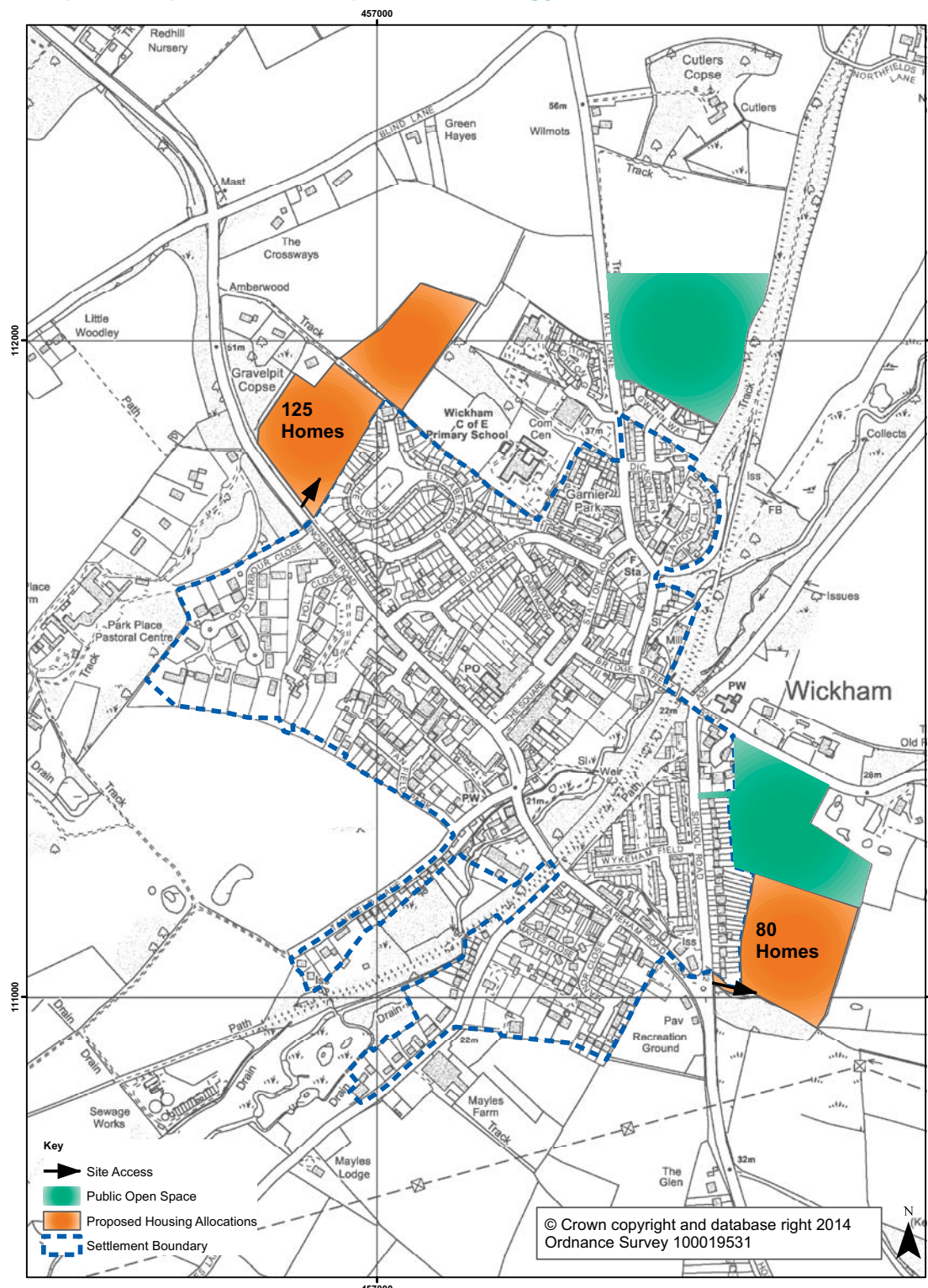
Proposed Allocation: Site 2438 – land at 'The Glebe', Southwick Road (southern part for housing, northern part for public open space).

Reasons:

- Southern part is 'least sensitive' in landscape terms (northern part 'highly sensitive').
- Good accessibility to facilities/services and adjacent to the existing settlement boundary/built environment.
- Well related/integrated with the pattern of development.
- Smaller site (of those available).
- Well contained by existing natural features (capable of landscape reinforcement) and avoiding significant visual intrusion (southern part of site).
- Offering to provide 3ha of open space on the northern part of the site and a replacement pavilion at Recreation Ground.
- Good access from A32.
- Archaeological constraints on northern part of site and southern area will need further investigation.
- No impact on the Welborne/Wickham Gap.

Conclusion: Site 2438 is suitable for 80 dwellings with access via the A32/A334 junction, minimising loss of trees, hedgerows and character. The retention and reinforcement of site boundaries is required, particularly along the eastern edge of the site (and northern edge of housing development). Provision of children's play facilities is required on-site, along with informal public open space and parkland to be laid out on 3 hectares (the northern part of the site), avoiding impact on archaeology. Improvement of pedestrian and cycle access into the village centre by improving the A32/A334 junction and providing pedestrian crossing facilities on School Road.

Map 3 Proposed Development Strategy for Wickham



Shortlisted sites rejected

It was not necessary or appropriate to include all the shortlisted sites as housing allocations because the sites would provide more than the 205 homes needed and two sites were rejected for the following reasons:

Rejected site: 1908 – land west of Mill Lane.

Reasons: This area was considered alongside site 1909 and performs similarly on some criteria. However, it is significantly less well contained and more visually intrusive, potentially risking opening up a wider area for development. Any land it can provide for open space is of types that other sites are better able to provide in locations well related to the village.

Development of this site (along with proposed site 1909) would concentrate all or most of the housing allocation in one location, contrary to community aspirations. The alternative of developing site 1908 in isolation would not be appropriate as it is less suitable for development than the proposed allocations.

Conclusion: not proposed for housing allocation.

Rejected site: 2488 – land at Titchfield Lane/Winchester Road.

Reasons: This area is 'highly sensitive' in landscape terms, notwithstanding its containment on some sides. The western boundary is not defined by features on the ground, making development visually intrusive from this direction and potentially opening up a wider area for development. It is not well related to the settlement pattern, does not have good links to facilities/services, and the proposed access onto Titchfield Lane would work against integration with the village. Any land it can provide for open space is less well related to the village than the proposed allocations.

Conclusion: not proposed for housing allocation.

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Local Plan Requirements

Both housing allocations (sites 1909 and 2438) would be required to satisfy various policies of Local Plan Part 1 and to contribute to the Community Infrastructure Levy, as follows:

- Provision of 40% of dwellings as affordable housing (Local Plan policy CP3);
- A mix of dwellings of which a majority are 2-3 bedroom units, including accommodation suitable for families and the elderly/downsizing (Local Plan policy CP2);
- The effective use of that part of the site proposed for housing, at an average density of approximately 30 dwellings per hectare (Local Plan policy CP14);
- The achievement of Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 for energy efficiency and level 4 for water efficiency (Local Plan policy CP11);
- Measures to ensure adequate access and other physical infrastructure, including measures to address foul and surface water drainage issues (Local Plan policy CP21);
- Development which is appropriate in scale and design and conserves the settlement's identity, countryside setting, key historic characteristics and local features (Local Plan policy MTRA 2);
- Payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy at a rate of £80 per square metre of residential development, excluding affordable housing.

Travellers

As part of the housing requirements for the District, there is a need to provide additional sites for travellers. Each main settlement (including Wickham) has been asked to identify a small site (about 5-6 'pitches') for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople close to, but not necessarily directly adjoining, the settlement.

There are a number of existing traveller sites around Wickham but none of the SHLAA sites are thought to be particularly suitable for this use. This consultation allows residents and landowners the opportunity of helping to identify a suitable site, rather than responding to planning applications on sites as they arise.

Therefore, we are seeking your views on where a traveller site should be located, bearing in mind it needs to be separate from existing/proposed housing but still easily accessible to facilities and services in Wickham.



Conclusions

To summarise, the NPSG and City Council officers have assembled an extensive evidence base, consulted widely with the public and prospective developers and given careful consideration to the available options and alternatives.

Although the NPSG Needs Assessment showed public support for 3 – 4 small sites being developed, this is not possible because of the nature of the sites put forward and for the planning reasons outlined in this exhibition.

The proposed site allocations at Winchester Road and The Glebe, along with associated provision of open space, community facilities and infrastructure, provide the best balance between the need for sites to meet planning criteria and achieving the aims and needs of the local community.

Planning officers are confident that these sites will be supported through the examination process and that competing sites can be resisted. This is important, as the selection of sites with a weak planning justification may result in additional sites being released. This would conflict with community aspirations as it would lead to more sites being released and more housing being developed than is needed to meet the housing target for Wickham.

Feedback/How to comment

We would like to know your thoughts on the proposed strategy; is it the best way to meet the needs of Wickham over the next 20 years? If not what is the best solution?

Failure to plan for further development is not an option. If Winchester City Council does not plan for development, we will have to allow planning applications irrespective of whether they are the best sites or not for the village. Winchester City Council and the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group want to work with the community to plan the best strategy for Wickham. WCC will strongly discourage site owners from making early planning applications (although we cannot prevent this).

Please complete the comment form and return to Winchester City Council at:

Strategic Planning Team
Winchester City Council
City Offices
Colebrook Street
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 9LJ

Next Steps

Following this consultation, Winchester City Council in consultation with Wickham Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group, will decide the full detail for LPP2.

A draft LPP2 will then be published in summer 2014. You will have an opportunity to make formal comments to Winchester City Council at this time. A further version of the Plan will be published in early 2015 followed by a public examination by a Planning Inspector during the summer of 2015.

The final Plan will be adopted in December 2015.



Or email your comments to wickhamlpp2@winchester.gov.uk

Copies of the comment form can be downloaded at:
www.winchester.gov.uk/lpp2sites

The closing date for comments is 5pm on **Friday 28 February 2014.**