

Wickham Needs Assessment for Local Plan Part 2

Wickham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Wickham Parish Council
July 2013

Introduction

The Wickham NP Steering Group of the Wickham Parish Council has followed a process, prescribed by WCC Strategic Planning, to assess Wickham's "need" and therefore provide evidence for the development of LP Part 2

This report is structured on WCC's Profile for Wickham and WCC's Local Plan Part 2 Questions Template for Housing, Infrastructure and Employment.

The report's content is based on evidence of need, gathered by the NP Steering Group (WPC) between January and July 2013. This evidence of need has been gathered from a number of sources, as recommended by WCC Strategic Planning. These sources include:

- Stakeholders - directly questioned
Estate agents and commercial letting agents, Community Land Trust, WCC re affordable housing.
Infrastructure/Service providers.
Schools-Wickham Primary School, Wickham Pre-School, Monkey Puzzle Nursery, Montessori School and Nursery, Merry-Go-Round Children's Centre, Play School-Wickham Centre, Poppins-Wickham Playgroup.
Wickham Chamber of Trade and local traders and businesses
Wickham Community Centre
- Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups – representatives invited to an event and asked to feedback formally
- Existing documents – reviewed the PP, VDS, MTHC, etc, for relevant evidence

The evidence of need gathered at this stage was used to test the opinion of the community at a community event (27 June).

In the report the group answer the questions in WCC's LP Part 2 Questions Template using the evidence gathered.

All evidence gathered is summarized in a number of supporting documents, listed at the end of this report and referred to in the text.

Wickham's Profile

What makes Wickham Special?

MTHC 2008 (Environment): Distinctive features of Wickham are that:

"The Village is compact" and "focused on the Square so that central facilities are easily available to all residents."

And landmarks include the fact that the Village is rural, surrounded by farmland and woodland.

"The mass of the Village is compact and nucleated although there is much green space within it."

Village questionnaire 2009: Three of the top four features most frequently cited as being "what is best about Wickham" were related to the environment – the rural nature, the fact that we are a village and the Square. Overall more commented on an aspect of our environment than anything else.

VDS 2.1 & 3.1:

“Wickham is a compact nucleated historic village.”“The countryside reaches up to the built environment from all directions, giving it an exceptional quality and importance to the landscape views looking outwards from the village and inward from the parish boundary.”

Blueprint 2010: Wickham is a peaceful, compact village in an attractive rural setting. Also residents value Wickham’s strong community spirit and rural setting.

PP 2013: “What makes Wickham Distinct? The unique nature of Wickham has been again and again described in terms of the strong community and our compact village character, with rural surrounds. This is what gives us our sense of identity.”

Challenges?

The key challenge concerning the community relates to the identity of Wickham. Residents have repeatedly told us that what makes Wickham special is that it is a **compact, rural village community**. This is very significantly challenged by the **FarehamSDA**, that shares some of the Parish boundary. However on top of this the settlement of Wickham itself is to have 250 further house which will be an **increase of greater than 25%** in the current settlement size.

Three further challenges to Wickham concerning the community are:

- Existing **sewage, drainage and flooding** problems. (That this is a major concern for residents was well demonstrated at a presentation organized by a developer in 2012, at which attendees insisted that this issue be discussed ahead of the prepared presentation.)
- Current inadequate **parking** provision
- Existing concerns over heavy **traffic**, which will dramatically increase with the development of Welborne.

Parking was one of the three most commonly sighted dislikes about Wickham in the 2009 Questionnaire and it is not just parking in the Square but lack of parking generally. Issues with heavy traffic and speeds also shared joint place with parking.

Sources of the above

Blueprint responses 2011

Village Questionnaire 2009

VDS 2005 and current draft

PP 2013

Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham’s Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013

Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013

Summary of Wickham Village Centre’s Strengths and Weaknesses

It appears that this SWOT is taken from NLP Retail and Town Centre Uses Study 2007. However this seems not to reflect Wickham’s individuality, in relation to the placement of some of the comments as weaknesses and threats rather than strengths. In particular, residents of Wickham consider lack of comparison shops a strength; poor demand for premises by national and regional retail is not considered a threat; nor the domination of independent traders. Wickham is an interesting characterful **village**centre rather than a multipurpose town centre.

LP Part 2 Guidance Notes Questions Template – Housing

1 Quantum

The housing requirement for Wickham is set at 250 in the Local Plan Part 2, leaving 248 to be allocated, as the 22 exception site houses will not now be counted by Winchester,

despite repeated requests for this from the community, in consultation for the LDF / LP Part1.

There is planning permission for Wickham Labs, for 31 dwellings, and 5 outstanding planning permissions. There is a current application for the old doctors surgery, for 8 dwellings. Therefore a total of 36 permissions and a current application for 8 leaves 204 to be allocated.

There is no mention of the phasing of these dwellings. We understand that the reason for this absence is, as SO stated in the meeting on 22 Feb, "that there needs to be a clear planning justification for this".

However, the community has repeatedly highlighted the need for **phasing** throughout the 5 years consultation on the LDF / LP Part 2, so that any new houses can do as is stated in the LP Part 2 and **provide for local housing needs over the 20 year period up to 2031**. This view was strongly supported by the Associations and Societies during our recent consultation (see Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013 and Community Land Trust response following Associations and Societies event, May 2013.) This was confirmed at the community event (see Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013.)

This is a major priority for the community as it will help to retain Wickham's identity and the integrity of the community. Wickham village is to see an **increase in size by more than one quarter**, significantly more proportionately than the other MTRA settlements in the same bracket. The community does not want this to be in one hit, resulting in a poorly integrated community, loss of our treasured compact village community identity, with no further growth towards the end of the 20 year period. (It is interesting to note the growth over the last 10 years, during which time there have been 0-24 houses per year see Wickham's Profile.) Phasing will also, importantly, protect affordable housing for local people (Community Land Trust, response following Associations and Societies event, May 2013) and to some degree market housing for local people.

However it is acknowledged in the Inspector's report on LP Part1 that there is not a justification for bring forward new housing schemes in advance of the full LP Part2 until the sewage, drainage and flooding problems are resolved, which would potentially start in 2017 <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/files/16357/Inspectors-Examination-Report-Final-FCR-2.pdf>

The inspector's comments on Wickham are in paragraphs 111 and 112:

111. In relation to Wickham, there are existing local development constraints relating to surface water flood risks and the capacity of the waste water treatment works pending improvements not planned before 2017. Consequently, the settlement's specific capacity and local needs for new housing, together with the contributions that development might make to necessary infrastructure improvements, are clearly matters for consultation, consideration and conclusion as part of the LP2 process and not this plan.

112. Notwithstanding and irrespective of proximity to the Fareham SDA, there is no firm evidence to demonstrate that Wickham cannot fulfil its designated role in the district's settlement hierarchy over the plan period which would justify any change to the identified number of new dwellings in the plan. On the other hand, in the light of all of the above, nor is there any present justification for seeking to bring forward new housing schemes in advance of the full LP2 process or to increase the allocation to reflect the fact that, as a district centre, Wickham's retail facilities...

2 Type

Affordable V Market Housing

Wickham has a need for **affordable housing – 100 dwellings in total** from the local connection list, which is actually 40% of the total 250 new dwellings (see Wickham affordable housing – local connection).

This need is confirmed by the CLT (see Community Land Trust, response following Associations and Societies event, May 2013). However, there is concern that any new affordable housing must be to **meet local need** (see Community Land Trust, response following Associations and Societies event, May 2013, Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013 and Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013).

This might be achieved by:

- Exception sites
- Increasing the % of affordable houses that are under the Community Land Trust rather than social housing (Council owned)
- Phasing – releasing slowly so meeting local need.

As far as the proportion of affordable housing that should be Shared Ownership or Intermediate Rented against Social Rented, there is evidence to support a significantly increased proportion of the first group (see Community Land Trust, response following Associations and Societies event, May 2013).

This identified need for such a high proportion of affordable housing (40%) is slightly at odds with the view that we have held as a PC (eg Parish Council response to WCC Plans for Places) and supported in earlier work (MTHC and PP) that Wickham has an imbalance of affordable to market housing and that new development should attempt to address this balance. This imbalance is confirmed with the 2011 Census data showing Wickham has 64% privately owned, 10% privately rented and 26% Council / RSL rented.

Special Needs

There is a high demand for suitable property for people to 'downsize' too (Evidence collected from Wickham Stakeholders, April 2013, Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013). The estate agents comment that, demand is higher for people looking to downsize to freehold property that is free from the restrictions and management charges associated with this type of property, than for warden-assisted accommodation. This is supported by our significantly higher number of 75+ year olds in relation to Winchester District average (15.6% v 9.1%).

Type of dwellings

The local estate agents state that the greatest demand accordingly is for older people looking for bungalows and ground floor flats to downsize to, within walking distance of the square. This demand is then followed by families looking for 3 or 4 bedroom, detached, **modest**, family homes. All of these styles are lacking in Wickham village, from the view of the estate agents.

Blueprint identified a need for the elderly to downsize and starter homes for the young. Our questionnaires highlighted overall to support for **modest** accommodation and a **mix** of sizes and types, with strongest need for dwellings for young families (Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013).

Wickham has significantly less 16-44 year olds than the Wickham District average (27.9% v 35.8%) an imbalance that could be addressed with appropriate modest housing.

More detailed and specific work on this is planned now we have completed our needs assessment, as this should drive the choices in relation to sites. However, evidence has been gathered to support the underlying principles:

Inside the current village boundary:

There is a strong view that as much as possible of new development should be **within** the existing village boundary, on **brownfield sites**(see Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013 and Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013).

In addition to the brownfield sites that currently have or are applying for planning permission (total 44 dwellings), a number of potential future sites have been identified, that could take development and some of which may well come up before 2031. This is we believe currently being investigated by WCC and an appropriate allocation will be given based on this, that will then determine the number of dwellings that will be required outside the current village boundary.

Outside the existing village boundary:

The WCC Site Assessment Checklist does not enable great differentiation between the various sites in the SHLAA, other than the section "conformity with the PP, VDS or a local vision statement".

The group has agreed basic principles for sites **outside** the current village boundary, prior to further work on the longlist of sites from the SHLAA, based on the evidence gathered, shown in the full list of supporting documents below, including the VDS and PP.

The compact village nature, surrounding countryside and rural environment of Wickham have consistently been identified by the community as what makes Wickham special and of importance to residents (2009 Questionnaire, 2009 Village Design Statement, 2013 Parish Plan, consultation over the LDF, 2008 onward). Therefore an overarching principle is that: **Development should be managed to maintain and if possible enhance these attributes.**

The basic principles for sites **outside** the current boundary to achieve this overarching principle are:

1 Priority should be given to sites against the current village boundary / built environment, to support maintenance of our compact village environment and surrounding countryside.

2 The total number of dwellings to be built outside the current village boundary should be accommodated over 3-4 sites, in smaller numbers.

The justification for this is that:

- 1 This is a view that has consistently been widely supported by the community, most recently evidenced by our consultation with the Associations and Societies and confirmed at the community event
- 2 This will avoid a large, poorly integrated extension to the village and facilitate maintenance of our strong identity as a village community
- 3 This will help support the community's determination for phasing, as different sites will naturally be built at different times
- 4 This enables a number of landowners to benefit rather than 1 or 2
- 5 This will enable the Parish to work with different developers who will bring different ideas and styles to the village.

3 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 the village
- 2 provide increased areas of native hedgerows and trees and areas of meadow
- 3 use effective screening

4 There is a strong desire to use development to enhance our open spaces. Open space or green space associated with developments should be under public ownership.

In August we are inviting all the land agents / developers representing all sites in the SHLAA to let them know what we have found.

LP Part 2 Guidance Notes Questions Template – Employment

- 1 Employment provision
Wickham has a deficit of 16-44year olds in comparison with the Winchester District and will see an increase of population by 25% with new housing. Therefore there should be a plan to increase employment opportunities in Wickham in proportion to this population increase and to help address this deficit in younger people.

- 2 Shopping centre boundary
The Square has been identified again and again as one of the features that makes Wickham special.

The Primary Shopping Area needs to be expanded to incorporate the whole of the Square, so that current retail premises are protected as such. This was supported at the Community Event (see Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013).

However, it is stated in the WCC Questions Template for Employment, under “issues affecting employment and retail in Wickham Town Centre” - “If the town centre does not improve the range and choice of facilities the town’s role in the hierarchy will diminish.” **Wickham is not a town but a village.** This view is strongly supported in the community and this is again evidenced in our recent consultation (see Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham’s Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013 and Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013). It is interesting that Wickham has been placed where it is in the hierarchy for the Market Town and Rural Area, as it has good facilities out of proportion to its size with only 1000 dwellings, and yet it is now being stated that the facilities need to “improve” to sustain it there. Wickham succeeds, just as other settlements within the MTRA do, as it is **different**, not because it has standard high street shops. The NLP Retail and Town Centre Uses Study 2007, Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses sighted in the Profile, misunderstands Wickham.

LP Part 2 Guidance Notes Questions Template – Community and Social Infrastructure

- 1 Is there a need for additional, or fewer facilities?

The Community Centre, Youth Club and Pavilion need to be added to the list of existing facilities in Wickham, completed by WCC in the template.

The Community Centre is well used by the local and wider community. The Community Centre is tired and dated and in need of significant refurbishment, as highlighted by the Wickham Community Association Trustees (see Wickham Community Association Response from Trustees). This need was supported by attendees at the Community Event (see Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013) and by the VDS (see Evidence from the PP and VDS relevant to Local Plan Part 2).

The Youth Club does not have a permanent home, being housed in a Portacabin and consideration should be given to providing a more permanent building, possibly on land close to the Centre, near to the skate parks and play spaces (see Wickham Community Association, response from the Trustees, following Associations and Societies event, May 2013).

The Pavilion on the Wickham Recreation Ground was identified in the PP as “fast approaching the end of its useful life”. An aspiration in the PP is to seek funding to replace the existing Pavilion. This is also supported in the WPC Sport and Recreation Strategy 2013-14. New development should facilitate this ahead of less pressing projects for sport and recreation.

Community transport is identified in the PP as a problem for Wickham, which has got worse since the Doctors Surgery was moved to the periphery of the village. Until recently the only provision for community transport in Wickham were the voluntary organisation ‘Community Care’ and the Lion’s minibus. The Community Association has lead a project to develop a Partnership of all organisations involved in supporting the community of Wickham and the surrounding area, to coordinate and enhance work in the community. Regarding the transport need, the Community Partnership has lead the introduction of a taxi-share with Southwick and Boerhunt which has helped address the shortfall in provision particularly in relation to the new Doctor’s Surgery.

Schools: See Evidence collected from Wickham Stakeholders, (April 2013). Whilst the Wickham C of E Primary School has potential capacity for two additional classrooms, this would displace the Wickham Pre-school. However there is land available for further additional facilities.

Energy and infrastructure provision:

Existing sewage, drainage and surface water problems are well recognized and documented in Wickham (VDS draft and Inspectors report on LP Part 2, also see supporting documents: Evidence collected from Wickham Stakeholders, (April 2013), Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham’s Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013, Evidence from the PP and VDS relevant to Local Plan Part 2, Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013).

The capacity of the water treatment plant has been highlighted as a problem by Southern Water. However, much more concerning is the issue of the capacity of the existing pipework from Wickham to the plant, which is believed to be inadequate for the current number of dwellings, and has been highlighted by Southern Water when dealing with individual foul water flooding problems. From the communication with Southern Water (see Evidence collected from Wickham Stakeholders, (April 2013), this lack of capacity of the pipework would seem to be due in part to the addition of surface water. However taking surface water associated with new development out of the system, whilst not potentiating this problem, will not address the existing flooding. It would seem that satisfactory resolution of the existing flooding will require replacement of the existing pipework connection. In the meantime increase in number of dwellings, even if surface water is removed, will only serve to increase

existing flooding levels. These issues need full investigation and appropriately addressed prior to any further development.

Existing heavy traffic has long been highlighted as a particular concern for the community (2009 Questionnaire and PP 2013). However this existing problem will significantly increase with the commencement of the Fareham SDA. Additional housing for Wickham will only potentiate these issues. That this is a main concern for the community is supported in recent consultation (see Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013, Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013). Issues related to traffic management and measures to mitigate against the future massive increase in traffic need to be a fundamental part of LP Part 2 for Wickham. Also the Westbound junction 10 on the M27 and general improvements to the junction need to be expedited ahead of development and planned in a fashion that will minimize impact on Wickham Parish.

Parking: Is the third infrastructure issue that has been repeatedly raised as a major concern for the community (Questionnaire 2009 and PP 2013). The recent community engagement supports this as a priority issue (see Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013, Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013). As much of Wickham's parking is within the Square this issue is also tied up with the refurbishment of the Square (see below). Additional parking, away from the Square but close by, needs to be planned within the LP Part 2. All new development must have adequate parking for new residents associated with the dwellings (PP).

The Square: has been identified again and again as one of the features that makes Wickham special (Questionnaire 2009, VDS and PP 2013). However, the Square provides a major part of Wickham's available parking and in the 2009 Questionnaire problems with parking in the Square were identified most frequently as things needing improvement. As stated in the PP: "The parking areas, hard paved areas and landscaping in The Square are in need of refurbishment and there is scope for redesigning the layout to improve the area for pedestrians, cars and buses at the same time. There has been discussion between the Parish Council, Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council regarding redesign of the Square. A proposed scheme has been prepared, but the necessary funding is not in place so wider consultation has not yet been undertaken. All parties should continue to actively push this forward. As the Square is so loved by residents any proposed scheme would be consulted on widely in the community." This should be planned for within the LP Part 2.

2 Is the amount, location and type of open space available adequate for the settlement?

Current Facilities:

Allotments	0 publically owned or publically accessible (2 privately run – Beechlea (0.95Ha) and Park Place 0.38Ha)
Equipped Children's and Young Peoples Space	Circle (0.32Ha) Community Centre (including 2 Skate Parks) (0.13 Ha) Recreation Ground ((0.07Ha) Total (0.52Ha)
Informal Green Space	Circle (0.34Ha) Water Meadows (2.1Ha) Bridge Street Village Green (0.65Ha)

Natural Green Space
 Lysander Meadow (3.99Ha)

Sports Grounds
 The Recreation Ground (1.4Ha)
 MUGA at Primary School (??Ha)

Parks and Recreation Grounds
 The Recreation Ground (2.28Ha)

Comparison of Current Facilities with New Standard (LP Part1 Policy CP7), (see LDF Core Strategy – PolicyCP7, Public Open Space Assessment –Wickham):

Based on the **current population** the new standard finds shortfalls:

Allotments	-0.42Ha	
Equipped Children’s and Young People’s Space		-0.54Ha
Sports Grounds	??shortfall as MUGA not included	

Based on the **current** population the new standard finds surplus:

Informal Green Space	+1.39Ha
Natural Green Space	+1.87Ha
Recreation Grounds	+0.69Ha

This document also identifies issues with distribution in relation to Natural Green Space, Sports Grounds and Parks and Recreation Grounds, as the Recreation Ground and Lysander Meadow are on the southern edge of the village. However, this document does not take account of the newly built MUGA, just outside the settlement boundary on the north of the village.

The PP states in relation to recreation and leisure that:

“The priority should be to maintain and improve, where appropriate, current and planned facilities. In particular we should seek funding in order to replace the existing Pavilion in the Wickham Recreation Ground, which is fast approaching the end of its useful life. If additional land should be offered without caveat, that is suitable for such facilities, use of that land should be pursued without detriment to other, more immediate projects.

Any future housing development will lead to an increase in the population of the Parish. It should be incumbent upon all developers to provide Open Space Funding, to include sport and play areas, commensurate with the increase in population associated with his development. Under no circumstances should this requirement upon the developer be waived.”

The PP states in relation to open space that:

“Wickham Parish is currently well served with open spaces. The principal areas are as follows:

Wickham Common, Hundred Acres Wood, the Recreation Ground, including recently gifted land, the Railway Line, Knowle Recreation Ground, Wickham Water Meadows, the Circle, Knowle Copse and Southwick Road Cricket Pitch. These areas total approximately 63 hectares.

Our open spaces help define the rural character of the Parish and contribute to the open views so much enjoyed by the parishioners, and should therefore be jealously guarded. Notwithstanding the current generous provision of open spaces, new residential development should provide amenity open space for community use, in accordance with Government guidelines, proportional to the population increase engendered by their development.

Action: Ensure open spaces are maintained, improved and enhanced for the benefit of the community.”

In Local Plan 2006 land to the east of Mill Lane, on the north of the village was designated RT5 and therefore protected from future development as land for recreation. This needs to be reviewed as part of the LP Part2 process. However it has not been consulted on within the community as yet, as our intention is to consider this once possible sites outside the existing village boundary are considered. At this stage different options might then become apparent.

3 Is there a need to change access in and around the settlement?

See comments above on:
Community transport
Traffic
Parking

Link between St Nicholas Church and the village:
The PP recognises the need to improve road safety for drivers and pedestrians at the junction between A32, Bridge Street and Southwick Road. However that St Nicholas Church is considered to be a key feature of the village and, whilst measures to improve road safety are sought, any measures that impact on the views of the church will not be supported (see Evidence from the PP and VDS relevant to Local Plan Part 2).

Green links:
All new development should provide green links, especially access to the Square, as is recommended in the VDS and the PP 2013.

The PP also identified the need to:
Adapt the existing footpath between Knowle and Wickham to accommodate cyclists as well as pedestrians
And open up the missing part of the Old Railway Line between Wickham and Knowle
These measures will in particular facilitate children cycling to and from school.

Supporting documents

LDF / LP Part 1 consultation 2008 – 2012, including Issues and Options Workshop 24 Jan 2008 and Blueprint responses 2011.

Evidence collected from Wickham Stakeholders, (April 2013)

CLT applications spreadsheet, November 2012

Analysis of SO applications and withdrawals, updated March 2013

Wickham affordable housing – local connection

Evidence from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, May 2013

Wickham Community Association, response from the Trustees, following Associations and Societies event, May 2013

Community Land Trust, response following Associations and Societies event, May 2013

Summary of questionnaire responses from Wickham's Associations, Societies and Groups, June 2013

Evidence from the PP and VDS relevant to Local Plan Part 2

Poster presentation for Community Event 2013

Summary of responses to questions asked at the community event to test what we had found so far, July 2013

Parish Plan 2013

VDS draft

Policy CP7 Open Space Standards - Public Open Space Assessment (2013)