

4. COUNTRYSIDE

Introduction

- 4.1 Winchester District is mainly countryside, a complex combination of contrasting landscapes, land uses and activities. Changes necessary to sustain a prosperous and multi-purpose countryside must be carefully managed. The Plan's countryside proposals are intended to guide and control such changes.
- 4.2 The main objectives of these proposals are to accommodate change in the countryside by:
- maintaining or enhancing the character of the countryside and its natural resources, for local people and visitors;
 - providing for the economic and social needs of people who live and work in rural areas;
 - improving services in existing villages, making them living communities, and reducing the need for increased car commuting to urban centres.

General

Control of development

- 4.3 Government policy requires that countryside should be safeguarded "for its own sake" and that any necessary change should maintain or enhance the quality of the environment. The Local Planning Authority aims to protect and enhance the character of the countryside and the setting of the settlements in the District.

Proposal C.1

Development will not be permitted in the countryside, unless it accords with Proposals C.5-C.27 of this Plan.

- 4.4 Inappropriate development threatens the character of the countryside. Only essential new development will be permitted within the area defined as countryside in the Plan (land which is outside the policy boundaries and development frontages defined on the Proposals and Inset Maps).

Gaps

Strategic Gaps

- 4.5 The Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) designates Strategic Gaps where areas of open or rural land provide substantial breaks between built-up areas.

These areas will be protected from built development and their boundaries will only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Much of the Meon Gap lies within the District, but it is contiguous with land in the adjoining Borough of Fareham. In this District it comprises land between Whiteley to the west and the River Meon to the east.

- 4.6 The function of a Strategic Gap is to prevent the coalescence of urban areas and protect their separate identities. In defining the extent of the Meon Gap within the District, only the land necessary to achieve these objectives has been included. The Local Planning Authority has considered adjacent developed areas, the visual perception of the Gap, and the need to maintain significant separation between the settlements. Within the Strategic Gap permission will not be granted for development which could be more suitably located elsewhere, or where the development would, either on its own or in association with other development, compromise the integrity of the Gap.

Proposal C.2

Development that would undermine the appearance or functions of the Meon Strategic Gap (as defined on the Proposals and Inset Maps) will not be permitted.

Local Gaps

- 4.7 The Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) also allows the definition of Local Gaps, to preserve the separate identities of smaller settlements at risk of coalescence. These are locally important areas of open and undeveloped land.

Proposal C.3

Development that would physically or visually diminish a Local Gap and thus undermine its function will not be permitted. The following Local Gaps are defined on the Proposals and Inset Maps:

- Bishops Waltham – Swanmore – Waltham Chase – Shedfield – Shirrell Heath
- Denmead – Waterlooville
- Kings Worthy – Abbots Worthy
- Otterbourne – Southdown
- Winchester – Compton Street



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- Winchester – Kings Worthy/Headbourne Worthy
- Winchester – Littleton

Development in Gaps

4.8 Development proposals in either a Strategic or Local Gap should consider particularly their effect on the Gap’s function. The Local Planning Authority will not permit development that would diminish such gaps physically or visually. Proposal C.4 controls changes of use and the erection of structures that would be intrusive.

Proposal C.4

Development (including changes in the use of land) in the Strategic and Local Gaps, which would otherwise be acceptable in the countryside, will only be permitted if they do not physically or visually diminish the Gap and thus undermine the Gap’s function and:

- (i) *do not require substantial buildings or structures or, where buildings are necessary, they are small-scale, ancillary to the proposed use, and sited unobtrusively, preferably as part of an existing group;*
- (ii) *do not include extensive hard surfaced areas or open storage;*
- (iii) *retain and incorporate appropriate management of areas of open land, woodland, hedgerows and trees;*
- (iv) *accord with Proposal DP.3 and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*

Essential Services

Criteria for development

4.9 In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to locate some facilities or services in the countryside. These may include community or educational facilities, premises for emergency services, or development by statutory undertakers and public utility providers. Each proposal should have special justification and applicants should submit a supporting statement demonstrating a need for the facility and the absence of a suitable site in a settlement. Such development should not prejudice the countryside conservation objectives of the Local Plan. Where such proposals involve public utilities

or telecommunications apparatus, the provisions of Proposal DP.16 will also apply.

Proposal C.5

In the countryside, the development of essential facilities and services to serve local communities may exceptionally be permitted where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it complies with Proposal DP.3 and other relevant proposals of the Local Plan and that:

- (i) *a location on a particular site in the countryside is essential for operational reasons; or*
- (ii) *there are no suitable alternative sites for the proposed development within the defined built-up area of the settlement(s) which the development is intended to serve; and*
- (iii) *an acceptable landscape scheme is submitted as part of the application.*

Landscape

Landscape character

- 4.10 The District’s distinctive landscape character derives from a combination of natural and man-made elements. Its conservation relies on retaining these elements. The landscape of the central-eastern part of the District is of national importance and designated as part of the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 4.11 The first Winchester District Landscape Assessment was published in 1995 as a background document to the Winchester District Local Plan, to identify the different landscape character types found within the District outside the AONB. These were used as a basis for identifying Areas of Special Landscape Quality that were then the subject of a policy in the County Structure Plan. It complemented a similar landscape appraisal that was carried out for the East Hampshire AONB (“The East Hampshire Landscape” Countryside Commission 1991).
- 4.12 The County Structure Plan (Review) provides a framework for assessing changes to the landscape. This emphasises the need to identify and take account of local landscape distinctiveness. “The Hampshire Landscape: A Strategy for the Future” (HCC August 2000) defines broad Landscape Character Areas

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providing the basis for identifying distinctive Landscape Character Areas in the District.

- 4.13 The Council will carry out a comprehensive review of the landscape of the District, including the AONB, using the Landscape Character Area approach. Until this is completed, development proposals should respect local landscape character by protecting, enhancing, and restoring the key characteristics of the landscape (as set out in Appendix 2). They should also have regard to the Pilot Landscape Character Assessment already undertaken, and the “main characteristics” of the broad Landscape Character Areas identified in the Hampshire Landscape Strategy document.

Proposal C.6

Development which fails to respect the intrinsic character of the landscape, or have an adverse impact on the key characteristics of the Landscape Character Area concerned (as set out in Appendix 2) will not be permitted.

Development which is acceptable within the terms of this and other relevant proposals of this Plan should be consistent with the landscape management strategies (as set out in Appendix 2).

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 4.14 The East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a national designation of a higher order than other “countryside” areas of the District. Proposal C.7, along with Proposal C.6, prevents development likely to have an adverse affect on the character of this area. The main aim within the AONB is to protect and enhance the environment to retain its special scenic quality and the character of the landscape.

Proposal C.7

Development that would have an adverse effect on the natural beauty, character and quality of the landscape of the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (as defined on the Proposals and Inset Maps) will not be permitted.

National Park designation

- 4.15 The Countryside Agency has also begun the process that could lead to designation of a

South Downs National Park and the establishment of a National Park Authority. The National Park area may include some or all of the area within the District currently in the AONB, and possibly some adjoining areas. National Parks have the same landscape conservation objectives as AONBs, but also aim to encourage recreational opportunities appropriate to the Park.

- 4.16 The Countryside Agency is assessing which areas within the whole South Downs area would most benefit from National Park status, and holding discussions on how the Park could be administered. The Agency put forward a suggested boundary for consultation in mid 2001. The Agency is not expected to submit a designation order to the Secretary of State until Spring 2002. While this process is under way, the existing Local Plan Proposals will continue to apply to the AONB.

Countryside management

- 4.17 Countryside management can help to resolve local conflicts arising from the demand for different uses. Its success depends on partnership between local communities, landowners, businesses and other organisations with an interest in the countryside. Currently the City Council participates in countryside management projects for the AONB and the Forest of Bere and will participate in other projects in the District where appropriate.

Nature Conservation

Wildlife habitats

- 4.18 The District has a number of areas that are important for their wildlife and nature conservation interest. These include areas that are of international, national and local importance that are recognised by special designations. Other undesignated areas may also have features that are ecologically important and all these areas should be protected from harmful development. Proposals C.8 - C.10 set out how the Local Planning Authority will protect such areas. The County Council has produced a map and a schedule of the important nature conservation areas within the District, and developers should refer to these to establish the location and quality of these areas, and whether any of the following proposals should apply.



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- 4.19 Although most of these areas are in the countryside, some important nature conservation sites are within the settlements. Proposals C.8 - C.10 apply also to such areas, where relevant.

Sites of international and national importance

- 4.20 The Local Planning Authority will use Proposal C.8 to protect sites of international and national nature conservation importance, and sites proposed for such designations.
- 4.21 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are statutory designations of European importance, and Ramsar Sites are wetland sites of international importance. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are sites of national importance.
- 4.22 Areas subject to these designations have the highest nature conservation importance, and are effectively irreplaceable. Development should therefore avoid damage to, or the loss of such sites, and development proposals will therefore be subject to special scrutiny.

Proposal C.8

Development likely to have an adverse effect on a site designated for its national or international nature conservation importance will not be permitted, unless the need for the development can be shown to outweigh the adverse impact. Where development is permitted that results in the loss of, or harm to, any of these sites, a compensating habitat will need to be provided.

Where sites are subject to international designations, development will only be permitted where there is no alternative solution, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development.

Where a site hosts a priority habitat or species (listed in the EC Habitats and Birds Directives), development will only be permitted for reasons of human health, public safety or to benefit the nature conservation of the site.

Sites of local importance

- 4.23 The Local Planning Authority will use Proposal C.9 to protect locally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). SINCs are those sites that the City Council, Hampshire County Council, English Nature and the Hampshire Wildlife Trust jointly agree are additional areas of particular importance for nature conservation in the District, conforming to an agreed set of criteria. The locations and details of such sites may be found in the County Council's schedule of important nature conservation areas within the District, which is published in association with this Plan.

Proposal C.9

Development likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) will not be permitted unless the need for the development outweighs the harm to the nature conservation value of the site. Where a development is permitted that results in harm to a SINC, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that there is sufficient provision to minimise the damage, using acceptable compensatory measures.

Other sites of nature conservation interest

- 4.24 Other undesignated sites may also contain wildlife interest, and Proposal C.10 will be used to protect them. Such sites would include Local Nature Reserves and smaller scale features of ecological interest such as woodlands, hedgerows and water habitats. Some important hedgerows are also protected by the Hedgerow Regulations (those over 30 years old and conforming to the criteria of the Regulations).

Proposal C.10

Where sites, other than those subject to Proposals C.8 or C.9, have been identified as being of local nature conservation importance, the Local Planning Authority will have regard to their nature conservation value when assessing development proposals that affect these sites. Where development is permitted that results in harm to any of these sites, provision should be made to minimise any harm, or to replace a habitat where it is to be lost.

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- 4.25 Appropriate management measures should be provided for wildlife habitats on or adjacent to development sites, to ensure their long-term welfare. Developers should seek specialist advice at an early stage.

Farming and Forestry

General

- 4.26 The farming industry needs to be efficient and flexible. Agricultural businesses in the District therefore have to be able to adapt to new legislation and changing market circumstances.
- 4.27 Although agriculture is undergoing change, it remains an important element of the rural economy and will remain the major use of land in the countryside. However, the countryside is also important for its amenity, natural beauty, recreation, ecology, history, and for defining the extent of settlements. The countryside should be conserved for its own sake, and the presumption against inappropriate development remains.

Agricultural land quality

- 4.28 The better grades of agricultural land (Grades 1,2 and 3a) are the most efficient and flexible in terms of production. Development otherwise acceptable in the countryside should avoid land of this quality wherever possible, although its importance will depend on the general quality of land locally. Proposals for development should justify the use of a particular location, following an assessment of the value of the land in relation to other land in the locality. This should include an assessment of landscape quality, wildlife habitats, recreational amenity areas and heritage features as well as agricultural quality.

Proposal C.11

Development that would adversely affect or result in the loss of good quality agricultural land (Grades 1,2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- (i) the impact on or loss of the land would have the least impact on the overall value of land in the locality, taking account of other conservation interests; and*
- (ii) the development cannot be directed*

towards land of a lower agricultural classification.

Essential rural development

- 4.29 New or larger farm buildings may occasionally be required to improve the efficiency of a holding, or to meet the requirements of new legislation.

Proposal C.12

Agricultural, horticultural or forestry development, for which a rural location is essential, will be permitted provided:

- (i) no suitable alternative building or facility is available which could reasonably be used for the intended purpose;*
 - (ii) there is adequate provision for the disposal of toxic or otherwise unpleasant effluent (see also Proposals DP.13 - DP.15);*
 - (iii) it is consistent with Proposal DP.3 and other relevant proposals of this Plan, and reflects the advice in 'Farm Buildings – A Design Guide for Hampshire', published by the Hampshire County and District Councils.*
- 4.30 The Local Planning Authority should be satisfied that development is essential to the proper functioning of agriculture or forestry and that it has to be located in the countryside rather than within an existing settlement. The Authority should be satisfied that applicants have exhausted possibilities for using existing buildings, and ensured that the impact of new development is minimised.
- 4.31 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 requires farmers wishing to construct new buildings or roads on farms of 5 hectares or more to notify the Local Planning Authority in advance. The Authority can comment on the design, siting and materials of the proposed development (but not on the principle), or require the submission of a planning application. In considering such notifications the Authority will expect the impact of new development to be minimised. In 1995, the County and District Councils of Hampshire produced 'Farm Buildings – A Design Guide for Hampshire' and the Planning Authority



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will expect the guidance provided to be reflected in relevant planning applications and 'prior notifications'.

Agri-Industry and Agri-Distribution

- 4.32 As the farming of some crops and livestock becomes less profitable, farmers are increasingly looking to ventures that can "add value" on the farm by processing, marketing and distributing produce.
- 4.33 The landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is particularly sensitive to large-scale "agri-industry" and "agri-distribution". Where, exceptionally, they are to be accommodated, they must be particularly well designed, sited and landscaped to avoid intrusion. Proposal C.13 provides that such developments should be subject to the same requirements as other essential agricultural or forestry development, as set out in Proposal C.12.
- 4.34 Agri-industrial/distribution facilities are already concentrated in the Micheldever Station area. These generate significant levels of traffic on rural roads. Further development of this type could erode the landscape character of this part of the District. Therefore, proposals for agri-industrial or agri-distribution development in the Micheldever Station area require particularly careful control.

Proposal C.13

Proposals for "agri-industrial" and "agri-distribution" development in the countryside will only be permitted where they accord with Proposal C.12.

In the Micheldever Station area, "agri-industrial" and "agri-distribution" development will not be permitted unless:

- (i) it requires a railhead location, can be satisfactorily served by the railhead and is located within the area defined on Inset Map 19; or*
- (ii) it involves the limited expansion of an existing firm or organisation where this can be accommodated on its existing site, and where the site has a lawful use for the same purpose.*

- 4.35 Proposals for such development within the Micheldever Station area will only be

permitted where the operation requires a railhead location, and this should be within the area defined on Inset Map 19. The Local Planning Authority should be satisfied that the development can be served by the railhead and that any requirements imposed by the railhead operator can be accommodated. Proposals for the expansion of an established business may also be acceptable where this would not be unduly intrusive or result in traffic levels inappropriate to local rural roads.

- 4.36 This area is also safeguarded for use as a railhead aggregates depot by the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. While the area is considered to be large enough to accommodate both an aggregates depot and agri-industrial/distribution development, the Minerals Planning Authority (Hampshire County Council) will be consulted on planning applications for such development.

Fish farms and water areas

- 4.37 Fish farming can be detrimental to water quality and the ecology of the District's rivers. The threat to the Upper Itchen has been sufficient to justify an "Article 4 Direction" to control fish farming and other agricultural developments.
- 4.38 There are different types of fish-related enterprises. Developers should demonstrate that a countryside location for the activity is essential. Normally only those types which can be defined as agriculture (as in Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) will be permitted in the countryside. The Local Planning Authority will seek the advice of the Environment Agency, English Nature, and others as necessary, to ensure that there will be no unacceptable impact on the landscape, ecology, wildlife interest, or the public enjoyment of the countryside.

Proposal C.14

The development of fish farms, fishing lakes and ponds for agricultural or recreational use will only be permitted in the countryside where a countryside location is essential. The Local Planning Authority should be satisfied that there will be no unacceptable impact on the landscape, ecology, or public enjoyment of the countryside.

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Rural Economy

Farm diversification

- 4.39 Farmers are increasingly diversifying into other activities, such as farm shops, farm-based food processing or packing, services to other farms, woodland-based enterprises, equestrian businesses, sporting facilities and tourist accommodation.
- 4.40 When considering such proposals, the Local Authority will take into account the needs and viability of the holding. The Authority's assessment of a planning application will be assisted by a statement from the applicant setting out the implications for the farm unit, and demonstrating the relationship between the proposed activity and the remainder of the farm unit (a "Farm Plan"). Any diversification scheme should be consistent with the rural characteristics of the holding and should, wherever possible, use existing buildings. Where no existing buildings are available for conversion, and a new building can be justified, it should be located unobtrusively, if possible within an existing group of buildings. All diversification proposals will be judged against other relevant countryside proposals in this Local Plan, and the requirements of Proposal C.15.

Proposal C.15

Proposals for new rural enterprises which form part of a farm diversification scheme will only be permitted where they:

- (i) are consistent with the characteristics of the holding and are likely to be sustainable for the foreseeable future;*
- (ii) re-use existing buildings wherever possible;*
- (iii) respect the local landscape character in accordance with Proposals C.6 and/or C.7, and accord with Proposal DP3 and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*

Re-use of non-residential buildings in the countryside

- 4.41 The letting of farm buildings for use by small businesses is a specialised form of farm diversification. Other non-residential buildings in the countryside may also be suitable for conversion to employment use.

The conversion of appropriate buildings can play an important role in meeting some of the employment needs of rural areas.

Proposal C.16

The change of use/conversion of non-residential buildings in the countryside to employment-generating activities (B1 and exceptionally B2 or B8 uses) will be permitted if the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that:

- (i) the form, bulk, and general design of the existing building(s) are in keeping with the locality, and the proposed development will maintain or enhance the local environment, in accordance with the requirements of Proposals C.6 and/or C.7;*
- (ii) the existing building is of permanent and sound construction, is not derelict and can accommodate the proposed use without substantial reconstruction;*
- (iii) where the building or site contains features of architectural, historic, nature conservation, landscape or visual interest, the proposed development will retain or improve such features;*
- (iv) the scale and nature of the activity can be accommodated without detriment to the visual character of the locality, is not in a remote location, and does not involve the relocation of an existing activity from a nearby town or village;*
- (v) the extent of the site is, or will be, clearly defined to prevent the development expanding into the surrounding countryside;*
- (vi) the proposal accords with Proposal DP3 and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*

Proposals for the use of buildings of architectural or historic interest will additionally be subject to the requirements of Proposal HE.17. The Local Planning Authority may impose planning conditions, or seek planning obligations, to ensure that, where the re-use of rural buildings is permitted, the buildings will not be replaced by new agricultural buildings that

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would not otherwise require planning permission.

- 4.42 Proposal C.16 applies only to non-residential rural buildings in the countryside, and the conversion of dwellings to commercial uses will not be permitted. Industrial uses (Class B1(c)) are often most appropriate for the re-use of rural buildings, as they tend to require fewer conversion works. However, where office uses (Class B1(a) and (b)) are more appropriate to the character of the building, these may be accepted, provided they are not existing businesses relocated from settlements.
- 4.43 General industrial uses (B2) may be acceptable in the countryside where they will not result in disturbance to existing uses, particularly housing. As they may provide fewer employment opportunities or have adverse traffic implications, storage and distribution uses (B8) are likely to be less acceptable than B1 uses, unless they involve low intensity use and traffic generation. However, in certain circumstances, e.g. in buildings of architectural or historic merit, where the conservation of their character is the primary objective, storage uses can be sympathetic, in requiring least alteration to the structure (see Proposal HE.17).

- 4.44 Only rural buildings whose form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings will be considered as appropriate for re-use. Buildings that are of temporary construction, or so dilapidated as to require rebuilding rather than conversion, will not be acceptable for re-use.
- 4.45 Some rural buildings, particularly older traditional buildings, make a positive contribution to the character of the environment. Proposals which would harm the character of such a building or its setting, or adversely affect the environmental quality and character of the area, will not be acceptable. Where the existing building is of no particular merit, proposals enhancing the rural environment will be sought. Proposal HE.17 relates to the use of buildings of architectural or historic interest, in addition to Proposal C.16.
- 4.46 Development should be small in scale and designed to respect local building styles and materials. Where it concerns more than one enterprise, the scale and nature of the whole development will be considered. Boundaries should be clearly defined and appropriately landscaped.
- 4.47 Conversion of buildings in remote locations will not be appropriate. Developers should



"The conversion of appropriate buildings can play an important role in meeting some of the employment needs of rural areas"

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demonstrate that their proposal cannot be accommodated in a nearby town or village, and that it would not result in the relocation or dispersed expansion of an existing business currently located in a town or village. Applicants should include a “travel plan” explaining how employees and visitors’ travel, especially by car, will be minimised.

- 4.48 Where the re-use of an agricultural building could lead to the erection of a replacement building, because it displaces an existing use, the Authority may consider withdrawing agricultural permitted development rights (as set out in the General Permitted Development Order).
- 4.49 The Local Planning Authority may also limit the hours of operation, the activities to be carried out, or restrict the use to a particular firm or individual; and expansion of sites will not normally be permitted. The permitted development rights of new activities (as set out in the General Permitted Development Order) may also be withheld, to control future intensification/extension of use on the site.

Housing

General

- 4.50 It is the Government’s policy that new house building in the countryside should be strictly controlled but the pressure for housing development in the countryside remains strong. This would in most circumstances be detrimental to the rural character of the District, and therefore specific planning policies are required to limit housing development to defined circumstances.

Proposal C.17

Housing development will not be permitted in the countryside except in the special circumstances detailed in Proposal H.6, and Proposals C.18-26.

Housing for essential rural workers

- 4.51 To maintain the proper functioning of agriculture or forestry, it may be necessary, in exceptional circumstances, to permit new residential accommodation for essential rural workers. It is, however, essential that all applications are thoroughly scrutinised, to ensure that stated intentions are genuine, are likely to materialise, and are capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time.

- 4.52 If it can be demonstrated that on-site accommodation is essential to support a new farming activity, on a newly created farm unit or on an established one, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by temporary accommodation.

Proposal C.18

The use of land for the siting of a residential caravan or mobile home will not be permitted unless it is for use by an agricultural or forestry worker and:

- (i) the applicant can demonstrate that the labour requirements of the holding or activity justify the worker;*
- (ii) the applicant can demonstrate that a continual presence on the holding is essential to the efficient working and development of the enterprise;*
- (iii) there is clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned, and that it has been planned on a sound financial basis;*
- (iv) existing accommodation on or near the holding is inadequate to meet the needs of the worker;*
- (v) where possible, the site is within an existing group of buildings or well screened.*

Where development is permitted in accordance with this Proposal, it will be only for a temporary period of up to three years, after which time the needs of the holding will be reviewed. Permission will not be granted for accommodation on speculative “bare-land” holdings (where no buildings exist). Applications for the renewal of a temporary permission are unlikely to be permitted. The occupancy of the caravan or mobile home will be restricted in the same way as dwellings.

- 4.53 Three years should be sufficient to demonstrate the viability and needs of an enterprise, and therefore a temporary permission is unlikely to be renewed. Proposals for accommodation on new holdings where there is no existing enterprise or buildings will not be permitted, as it will not be possible to satisfy the requirements of Proposal C.18.

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- 4.54 New dwellings will only be considered where an agricultural or forestry unit or activity has been established for at least 3 years, and where there are no other dwellings in the locality suitable for occupation by the worker, or opportunities for providing accommodation by converting or subdividing existing buildings.
- 4.55 Circumstances where a new forestry dwelling is justified are likely to be rare as, under modern methods of forestry management, the workforce is largely peripatetic. Exceptionally on-site accommodation may be justified to service intensive nursery production of trees.

Proposal C.19

Dwellings for workers in agriculture or forestry will not be permitted unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that:

- (i) *the activity has been established for at least 3 years, been profitable for at least one of them, and it is demonstrated that it is currently viable and has a clear prospect of remaining so;*
- (ii) *criteria (ii) and (iii) of Proposal C.18 are still satisfied and the dwelling is essential to its continued viability and efficient working;*
- (iii) *existing accommodation on or near the holding is inadequate to meet the needs of the workers who must be housed on it;*
- (iv) *an existing dwelling (or building suitable for conversion to a dwelling) serving or closely connected with the holding, which was suitable for occupation by an agricultural or forestry worker, has not been recently sold separately or otherwise alienated from the holding;*
- (v) *the proposed dwelling is of a size appropriate to the productivity of the holding (normally 120m² -150m², including office space);*
- (vi) *the proposed dwelling is designed to reflect local distinctiveness and, where possible, located as close as possible to existing farm buildings.*

In assessing proposals, all of the above criteria should be met, and the Local Planning Authority will consider the needs of the holding rather than the desires of the applicant. Where housing development is permitted in accordance with this Proposal, the occupancy of the dwelling or dwellings will be restricted by an occupancy condition. Where dwellings exist on the holding that are unrestricted, but essential to the operation of the holding, such conditions may be placed on these dwellings, having regard to the need to ensure that planning conditions are reasonable, necessary and effective. The Authority may seek a planning obligation to restrict the future subdivision of holdings or the separation of dwellings from land or buildings.

- 4.56 The Local Planning Authority will require evidence that the worker is necessary for the continued operation of the enterprise, that it is essential for that worker to be readily available at most times, and that the enterprise is viable and likely to remain so.



"The design and siting of the (new agricultural) dwelling should be as sensitive as possible"

- 4.57 Given the potential intrusion of a new building in the countryside, the design and siting of the dwelling should be as sensitive as possible. Particularly important is the size of the proposed dwelling, not only because of its visual impact but also its relationship to the productivity of the holding.

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- 4.58 Dwellings that are unusually large in relation to the agricultural needs of the unit, or unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income the unit can sustain, will not be permitted. Each case will be considered on its merits in relation to the size and nature of the holding, the management responsibilities of the worker, the income derived, and the likely future productivity and viability. Normally dwellings will be expected to be within the range 120m² - 150m² floor area (externally measured), the typical size of a 3 - 4 bedroom house. Dwellings for farm employees should normally be close to 120m², whereas dwellings for farmers with management responsibilities, requiring office space, should not exceed 150m².
- 4.59 The 150m² limit allows for the incorporation of farm offices, where they are needed. To minimise the overall impact of a dwelling, garages and stores should not be an integral part of the living accommodation, but should be provided separately, designed to relate to the farm buildings rather than the new dwelling. The Local Planning Authority will normally prefer the conversion of an existing suitable building, or part, to a dwelling rather than a new building.
- 4.60 As dwellings would not be permitted without a demonstrable agricultural or forestry need, the Local Planning Authority will ensure they are retained for important rural workers. The future occupancy of the dwelling will therefore normally be restricted by condition to people solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in the locality in agriculture or forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants. When granting permission for a new agricultural dwelling subject to an occupancy restriction, such conditions may also be imposed on existing unrestricted dwellings on the holding, in the control of the applicant, which are needed in connection with the holding.

Removal of occupancy conditions

- 4.61 When owners or occupiers of restricted dwellings or mobile homes seek to have such a condition removed, the Local Planning Authority will assess the need for such conditions to be retained, taking into account the need for accommodation on the holding and in the locality.

Proposal C.20

Applications for the removal of conditions restricting the occupancy of dwellings to agricultural or forestry workers will not be permitted unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the dwelling is no longer required for workers on the holding or in the surrounding area, nor is likely to be required in the foreseeable future. Where such conditions are removed, permission will not be granted for new agricultural or forestry workers' dwellings on the holding or on any new holdings created by its sub-division.

- 4.62 A "Whole Farm Plan" in support the application should indicate current and planned investment in the holding, the current and proposed nature of the enterprise, a financial forecast, and the need for accommodation in relation to the criteria of Proposal C.19.

Dwellings for other rural workers

- 4.63 Other uses of rural land will not normally justify on-site accommodation. Pressure for such accommodation often comes from those keeping horses or involved in activities ancillary to farming. While operators may wish to carry out such activities in the countryside, they will not normally justify an exception to Proposal C.17.
- 4.64 Any need for on-site accommodation should be considered at an early stage in choosing a site. In considering proposals to establish such enterprises, the Local Planning Authority will assess the likely current and future needs for housing against the availability of suitable existing accommodation. Where a development would be likely to generate pressure for unacceptable residential development, this may justify rejecting the proposal. However, if a dwelling on or near the holding exists subject to an agricultural occupancy condition, the Authority may be prepared to amend the condition to enable occupation by workers needing to live on or close to an equestrian or agriculture-related enterprise. Where a new dwelling is said to be essential in connection with the running of an established enterprise, it will be considered against the criteria set out in Proposal C.18 and C.19.



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Proposal C.21

The development of dwellings in the countryside for workers employed in enterprises not connected with agriculture or forestry will not be considered unless an essential need can be demonstrated, using the criteria for agricultural workers' accommodation as set out in Proposals C.18 and C.19. The Local Planning Authority may be prepared to relax an occupancy condition on an existing agricultural or forestry worker's dwelling to allow its occupancy by such a worker, where this would achieve the proper management of a holding or area of countryside and the enterprise can satisfy the criteria of Proposal C.19.

Extension and replacement of dwellings

- 4.65 There is a clear demand for large houses in the countryside, but the replacement or extension of existing dwellings can have a major impact on the character of the rural environment. The 1999 Winchester Housing Needs Survey provides evidence of a continuing need for small, more affordable accommodation in the countryside as well as within the settlements of the District.
- 4.66 The replacement or extension of existing dwellings will be restricted to retain small dwellings to meet local needs, and maintain a mix of sizes and types of dwelling. Any acceptable extension or replacement should reflect the character and design of the original dwelling, and should not result in a dwelling that is disproportionately larger than the one it is extending or replacing.

Proposal C.22

Within the countryside, the replacement or extension of dwellings will be permitted provided that:

- (i) it does not significantly change the character of the existing dwelling by increased size and/or unsympathetic design, in accordance with the requirements of Proposal DP3;*
- (ii) it would not reduce the stock of small (1 or 2 bedroom) or more affordable dwellings in the countryside;*
- (iii) the proposal accords with Proposal DP3 and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*

In considering planning applications to extend or replace dwellings which have previously been replaced or extended, the Planning Authority will have regard to the effect of the proposals on the size and character of the original dwelling.

In considering planning applications to extend or replace existing agricultural workers' dwellings, or to develop additional ancillary buildings within their curtilages, the Local Planning Authority will have regard to the relationship between the size and nature of the proposed extension and/or building and the ability of the holding to support the proposed development, in addition to the criteria set out above.

- 4.67 If a dwelling is derelict or has been demolished, permission for a new dwelling or extension will not be granted, unless it has recently been accidentally destroyed. Only dwellings that have been continuously occupied will be considered suitable for replacement/extension.
- 4.68 If an existing dwelling is unoccupied but can be re-used or rehabilitated without the need for major works requiring planning permission, it may be considered appropriate for replacement/extension, depending on the particular merits of the case.
- 4.69 In assessing any proposal to extend or replace a dwelling, the Local Planning Authority will take account of other recent extensions to, or replacements of, the dwelling, and the cumulative effect on the size and character of the original property.
- 4.70 There is a need for a mix of dwelling sizes and types in the countryside, to retain variety in the rural housing stock. The Local Authority will seek to retain this variety by limiting the proportion and nature of any extension to existing dwellings. The replacement or extension of existing dwellings with a floor area of up to 120m² floor area should not exceed 25% of that existing. Replacements/extensions of existing dwellings over 120m² should reflect the proportions and design of the existing dwelling.
- 4.71 All extended and replaced dwellings in the countryside should reflect the form and character of the existing dwelling in terms of size and design, and should maintain or enhance both the immediate and wider

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setting of the building. Applications for replacement or extension of dwellings should include a statement setting out the design principles adopted, and the relationship of the proposal to the existing building and the wider locality. The resulting dwelling should not lead to increased intrusion in the landscape.

Conversions and changes of use

- 4.72 The presumption against non-essential residential development applies also to changes of use of existing buildings. The pressure to convert existing buildings, such as barns, to dwellings is substantial and will be resisted to protect the appearance and integrity of the countryside.

Proposal C.23

The change of use of existing buildings in the countryside to residential use will not be permitted, except within the terms of Proposals C.19, C.24 or HE.17.

Conversion of larger buildings in extensive grounds

- 4.73 Some larger buildings in the countryside, usually large houses often in extensive grounds, may no longer be suited to single family occupation. They are unlikely also to be suitable for the small-scale employment uses favoured by Proposal C.16.
- 4.74 To retain the features of the building and grounds, and minimise traffic generation, such properties may be more suitable for uses such as hotels, recreation, or institutional uses such as schools, rest or nursing homes. Conversion/subdivision to flats or smaller dwellings may be accepted in limited circumstances where it can be demonstrated that there will be no harmful effects on the rural environment.

Proposal C.24

The change of use of existing buildings in extensive grounds (which are not suitable for employment use by virtue of their scale, impact on the building, or traffic generation) to hotels, recreational uses, or institutional uses will be permitted provided that:

- (i) *it would not be harmful to the rural environment or require additional development, either immediately or in*

the future, which would be harmful;

- (ii) *it conforms with Proposal DP.3, HE.17 and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*

The conversion or subdivision of such buildings to flats or small dwellings may exceptionally be permitted provided criteria (i) and (ii) are met.

Staff accommodation

- 4.75 Staff accommodation may be permitted in association with large buildings in the countryside, where it is genuinely required to service them. It should normally be well related to the main building, and, where possible, be provided by the conversion or extension of an existing building. The design of any new building should be sympathetic to its rural location and the main building.

Proposal C.25

The Local Planning Authority will permit the conversion or extension of existing buildings to provide staff accommodation in association with large buildings provided that:

- (i) *it is satisfied that there is an overriding need for the accommodation to be located on-site;*
- (ii) *the proposed development accords with Proposals DP.3, HE.17 and other relevant proposals of this Plan and, in particular, is in sympathy with the building and its grounds.*

Sites for gypsies and travelling showpeople

- 4.76 The Local Planning Authority has a duty to consider applications for permanent quarters for travelling showpeople and permanent or temporary sites for gypsies. Proposal C.26 sets out the criteria against which applications will be considered.

Proposal C.26

Permanent quarters for travelling showpeople, or sites for gypsies, will only be permitted where:

- (i) *the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the need for such provision in the locality overrides the*

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- general objections to residential development in the countryside, for example, because of the applicant's strong local connections;*
- (ii) the site currently (or until recently) accommodates buildings or non-agricultural commercial uses and the proposed use would maintain or enhance its appearance;*
 - (iii) the site is capable of accommodating the number of caravans/mobile homes proposed together with any proposed equipment or business activities, using acceptable space standards;*
 - (iv) the site will not be unduly intrusive and is, or will be, clearly defined by physical features (such as hedges) and adequately landscaped to blend the site into its surroundings;*
 - (v) the site is capable of being provided with essential services and is within reasonable distance of schools, shops, and other community facilities;*
 - (vi) the site is not in the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Strategic or Local Gaps, or of particular ecological, historic or archaeological importance;*
 - (vii) the proposal accords with Proposal DP3 and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*

Where quarters or sites are permitted the Local Planning Authority may impose conditions restricting the proportion of the site which may be covered by equipment, the hours during which such equipment may be tested or repaired, limiting those parts of a site which may be used for business operations, and/or limiting the number of days for which gypsy caravans may be permitted to stay on a transit site. The Authority may also seek a planning obligation so as to limit the future occupation and use of the site.

4.77 Proposal C.26 reflects Government advice on travelling showpeople and gypsies, as set out in Circulars 22/91 and 1/94. These highlight their particular circumstances and needs, but also point out that normal planning considerations should continue to apply

when considering proposals for sites. This includes the advice on the need to protect the countryside. While the lifestyles of travelling showpeople and gypsies are different, their land use requirements are similar. Accordingly, Proposal C.26 seeks to direct proposals for sites to areas of land which are already used for buildings or commercial activities, particularly derelict land. It is important that sites are close enough to existing settlements to enable residents to make use of local facilities and services, particularly schools and shops. On the other hand they should be located so as to avoid conflicts with the settled population, particularly with respect to disturbance from equipment and business activities.

Recreation

Sustainable facilities

4.78 The countryside is an important recreation and tourism resource, but it is crucial that related activity does not destroy the qualities of the countryside which attract such activity. Levels of recreational activity which maintain these inherent qualities are termed "sustainable recreation". Development related to such activities will only be permitted if the site and wider area are capable of accommodating it without long-term detriment.

Proposal C.27

Development of recreation and tourist facilities will be permitted in the countryside provided that they:

- (i) maintain and safeguard the open and undeveloped nature of the countryside and/or gaps between settlements;*
- (ii) do not require buildings or structures of a type or quantity which would be harmful to the rural character of the area;*
- (iii) do not conflict with the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- (iv) conform with Proposals DP3, RT.7, RT.15, and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*