

Introduction

11.1 This Chapter contains proposals relating to Winchester and its immediate surroundings. These complement the general proposals contained in previous Chapters, and should be read in conjunction with them. The proposals are organised under relevant subject headings.

The Future of Winchester Study

11.2 The Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review) policy E19 recognises the special character of Winchester. It seeks to ensure that development in and around Winchester protects its heritage and requires an assessment of environmental capacity to be carried out so as to direct development to the most suitable locations. In response to this policy, the City Council has undertaken the "Future of Winchester Study". The aim of the Study was also to consider the town's social and economic assets, as well as its environmental qualities, based on wide discussion and consultation, and to produce a framework to guide development in the long term.

11.3 The Study took a four stage approach:

- understanding Winchester's social, economic and environmental character (what matters and why);
- identifying pressures for change that could affect this character;
- assessing possible future scenarios and types of development that could be accommodated;
- translating the findings into guidelines for planning and other strategies and monitoring the results.

The Study was started in June 1998 and its results were endorsed by the City Council in June 1999. It was published in 2000.

11.4 The Study identified a large number of attributes that are important to Winchester's character, but refined these down to a small number of core themes and characteristics:

Strengths;

- its rich historic legacy;
- its setting;
- its small scale and compact centre;
- the green wedges, River Itchen, water meadows and abundance of trees;

- its strong local economy;

Weaknesses;

- threats to air quality;
- impacts from the use of private cars;
- perceived lack of range of shopping opportunities in the town centre;
- instances of social exclusion and pockets of deprivation.

11.5 The Study then considered the changes that Winchester would be under pressure to accommodate, either resulting from the desires of people living, working in or visiting the town, or those imposed by wider changes such as economic trends or technological advances. This identified some conflicts between what people want, such as the desire for less congestion and pollution but also the ability to use their cars freely and to park easily and cheaply.

11.6 The results were drawn together in a "Framework for Change", proposing policy and management guidelines for all of the features that are important in maintaining Winchester's special character. Where these are related to planning issues they have been taken into account in developing the Local Plan's policies for Winchester. Some of the key recommendations, such as the need for an Urban Capacity Study, have already been actioned but others may not be within the scope of the Local Plan to take forward and will require action by other means.

11.7 The Study concluded that the objectives that required investment or development outnumbered those that would constrain it, although many constraints were highly important. Therefore, the overall aim proposed was to maintain Winchester as a "compact city" and make better use of what the town already has. There should be a sequential approach to development, concentrating new development within the existing boundary, particularly in and adjacent to the town centre (an approach that is now incorporated into Government advice, in PPG3). However, at some point, continued concentration of development within the town could start to destroy the qualities that the approach is seeking to protect and there will need to be some carefully planned growth.



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11.8 Since the Study was undertaken the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review has imposed a requirement to plan for a "reserve" MDA at Winchester City (North). The Future of Winchester Study concluded that new development would need to be sustainable and maintain Winchester's core characteristics. Whilst this is particularly applicable to maintaining the town's setting, this does not mean that all aspects of its setting are sacrosanct. The approach to planning for the possibility of major development at Winchester City (North) is set out in Chapter 12, New Communities.

Environment

Winchester's special character

11.9 Winchester's heritage and environment are of international importance. The town centre was the first in England to be designated a Conservation Area. The town has a wealth of historic buildings and sites, its archaeology is rich and varied, and its townscape is of the highest quality. Additionally, the town is set within a landscape of particular importance and attractiveness, and there are many landscape and other features within the town that are of great importance, such as ridgelines, vegetation, and open areas. These qualities and the benefits of the town's setting and biodiversity are detailed in The Future of Winchester Study.

11.10 Winchester's topography provides strong visual links between the town and its setting. The surrounding countryside is visible from many parts of the town, and there are many views into the town from outside. Accordingly, it is important that the many individual elements that combine to constitute the special character and identity of the town itself are conserved. The Future of Winchester Study includes a detailed "Framework for Change" (Future of Winchester Study, Appendix F), which sets out in detail the characteristics which matter most for Winchester's special character, examines the issues, trends and threats that may affect them and sets out policy and management implications. These have been taken into account in developing the Local Plan's policies and are a valuable reference for considering development proposals, whether they be individual schemes or wider strategies.

11.11 In addition, the City Council, along with a number of partners, has commissioned the

Winchester Conservation Area Project to assist in the management and protection of the Conservation Area. The Project is in three parts, the Conservation Appraisal, the Conservation Area Review and the Conservation Area Strategy. The Conservation Area Appraisal assesses the quality and character of the Conservation Area, describing the town's development and identifying historic assets and their contribution to the environmental quality of Winchester. The Conservation Area Review highlights issues such as detracting features and opportunities for enhancement and includes a review of boundary issues. The Conservation Area Review introduces an environmental capital matrix that relates to the qualities of the area. The matrix is divided into eight categories, covering every aspect of the form of the town and its buildings, to enable proposals to be assessed against the various qualities of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Strategy sets targets and priorities to assist the management of the Conservation Area and provides a benchmark for future reviews. It links conservation issues with wider aspects, including traffic management, tourism, town centre management and housing.

11.12 The Plan's general proposals relating to design and development principles and the historic environment (Chapters 3 and 5) are also aimed at conserving the special attractiveness of Winchester.

Proposal W.1

In order to protect and enhance the special character of Winchester and its landscape setting, development (including redevelopment, extensions, alterations and changes of use) which accords with other relevant proposals of this Plan will be permitted, provided it respects the particular architectural and historic qualities of the town as a whole and its landscape setting. Development on steep slopes will only be permitted where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is appropriately designed for the site conditions and will not detract from the quality of the townscape and landscape of Winchester (see also Proposal DP.5).

11.13 Winchester is unique among the settlements of the District in terms of its topography and the spacious development on prominent, well-treed hills and slopes (e.g. St. Giles's Hill and Sleepers Hill). The characteristics of these areas contribute to the town's character and should be conserved. With dense tree cover, the steepest slopes are attractive features in views within Winchester, as well as from viewpoints outside the town. Any further development on the steepest slopes should be carefully designed to protect this character.

Housing

11.14 The Urban Capacity Study indicates that Winchester has considerable scope for housing development within its defined built-up area (Proposal H.2). The Local Plan's proposals promote the realisation of this capacity within a design-led approach, aimed at achieving high environmental quality. The Local Planning Authority will encourage the re-use of upper floors within Winchester town centre, and housing is likely to be an appropriate use in many cases (Proposal SF.3). In the town centre, and in other parts of the town well served by public transport, there is scope to optimise the capacity of residential development opportunities without requiring large amounts of car parking provision.

Employment

11.15 The pressures for office development in Winchester resulted in office restraint policies being introduced in the mid 1970s. Even so, office floorspace has increased considerably. The current Winchester District Local Plan strengthens office restraint policies and its policies resulted in a net reduction of office floorspace in Winchester since it came into effect.

11.16 There remain concerns about the pressures brought about by office development, but a more flexible approach is considered necessary in order to provide for small office units, particularly in Winchester town centre. Proposals E.3 and E.4 set out the approach to office development in Winchester, which seek to take advantage of the town centre's opportunities for sustainable development on sites well served by public transport and accessible by walking and cycling.

Facilities & Services

11.17 Winchester town centre offers the most comprehensive range of facilities and services available in the District. The Local Plan's sequential approach to commercial and leisure development promotes such development within the defined town centre of Winchester or the District's other main centres (see Proposal SF.1). The Plan also seeks to resist the loss of such facilities at ground floor level within the town centre, where small and specialist businesses contribute considerably to the town's special character.

11.18 In recent years a number of large public houses have been developed in the town centre, leading to concern about the effect on residential properties nearby. Proposal SF.2 seeks to ensure that new development within Use Class A3 avoids problems arising for neighbouring uses.

11.19 The continued economic health of the town centre is closely related to the vitality and viability of the core shopping area. It is important to ensure Winchester remains attractive as a shopping destination attracting large numbers of visitors. In order to help support the primarily retail function of the centre, for environmental as well as economic reasons, Proposal SF.4 seeks to prevent a net reduction in the amount of retail floorspace within the defined Primary Shopping Area.

Recreation & Tourism

11.20 There is a serious shortfall of recreational space in Winchester, amounting to a deficiency of 6.4 hectares of play space and 20.7 hectares of sports provision. Existing recreational facilities should be retained, and improved wherever possible. Important recreational areas within the defined built-up area and within adjacent areas of countryside are subject to the provisions of Proposal RT.2. Where deficiencies in the standard or quality of provision are identified in these spaces, through the Open Space Strategy, new development will be expected to contribute to improvements in accordance with Proposal RT.3 of this Plan.

11.21 The most substantial shortfall of provision is in sports grounds, and the Government considers that the provision of adequate playing fields should be accorded high

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priority. Additional housing development taking place within the built-up area in this Plan period will increase this need. Proposal RT.4 therefore allocates areas of land on the edge of the town primarily for playing field provision. These are at Bushfield Camp, north of Harestock Road, and in the Courtenay Road area (see Proposal RT.4 and paragraph 9.24) and are identified on Inset Map 45. Children's play facilities should generally be provided within developed areas, in accordance with Proposal RT.5, although there may be scope for facilities for older children in association with sports ground usage.

11.22 The Bushfield Camp area is the most appropriate location for additional playing fields, and should be the first priority for such development. It is therefore subject to the provisions of Proposal W.2 as well as RT.4. The area could accommodate a considerable part of the shortfall in provision, but it should also provide opportunities for informal recreation and possibly small-scale visitor related uses, as set out in the Bushfield Camp Study (Winchester City Council, 1997). The area also offers the opportunity for the development of a Park and Ride car park (see Proposal W.3).



"The Bushfield Camp area is the most appropriate location for playing fields".

Proposal W.2

At Bushfield Camp, within the area defined on Inset Map 45, planning permission will be granted for the provision of facilities for open sports, informal recreation and small-scale tourism related uses, provided that:

- (i) proposals include the provision of a substantial area of sports pitches to serve the general recreational needs of Winchester, and associated areas of informal recreation in appropriate locations;*
- (ii) additional planting is provided to minimise the visual impact of the facilities in views from the surrounding countryside and measures are taken to protect areas of nature conservation interest;*
- (iii) vehicular access is provided from Badger Farm Road, along with good public transport facilities, and footpath and cycleway links to the surrounding residential areas;*
- (iv) the area is planned and managed to ensure that the uses appropriate to the various parts of the site are inter-related and take proper account of the findings of the Bushfield Camp Study;*
- (v) the development accords with proposals RT.4, C.4, DP.3, RT.7, RT.8, and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*

11.23 The Bushfield Camp area is adjacent to the urban edge of Winchester, and part of a larger Local Gap. The former Army camp area provides an extensive area of level land that would form the main area suitable for additional playing fields, but there are a number of other issues relating to this area and the adjacent countryside.

11.24 The Bushfield Camp Study identified areas suitable for formal and informal recreation, and the potential for any associated recreation/tourism facilities. The provision of access to the site was examined, including footpath and cycle access from adjacent residential areas, and public transport routes. The Study concluded that a Park and Ride facility could be developed in the Bushfield area, in association with recreational uses (see Proposal W.3). The Winchester

Movement and Access Plan promotes such a development, which is programmed from 2003 onwards.

- 11.25 The Study's proposals take particular account of the area's prominent and sensitive location and the need for care to ensure that facilities are integrated into the local landscape. Recreational facilities provided should generally be open uses of a low key nature, so as not to be intrusive in wider views. The elevated position of the site, the exceptional views over the Itchen Valley, and areas of regenerating downland vegetation at the margins, provide potential for informal recreation. This could include the provision of a landscaped or nature conservation area between the original camp and Badger Farm Road.
- 11.26 The Local Planning Authority will ensure that the uses proposed for the various parts of the area are appropriate to its character and that they interrelate well. It will, therefore, be necessary to establish comprehensive principles of development for the entire area, in accordance with Proposals DP.1 and DP.3, prior to planning permission being granted for any aspect of the development. The principles should demonstrate that full account has been taken of the conclusions of the Bushfield Camp Study, and should be integrated with a detailed Management Plan for the whole area.
- 11.27 Winchester is one of the premier tourist attractions in the country in view of its important heritage and the City Council encourages the town's role as a cultural and leisure centre for the District. Many facilities are used by local residents and visitors to the District and the Plan allows for the range of tourist attractions, leisure facilities and visitor accommodation to be developed and extended (see Chapter 9, Recreation and Tourism).

Transport

- 11.28 The Winchester Movement and Access Plan promotes a balanced transport strategy for Winchester that aims to overcome problems of congestion and pollution. It has been developed jointly by the City Council and Hampshire County Council and is one of a number of Area Transport Strategies promoted through the Hampshire Local Transport Plan.

- 11.29 In order to reduce the adverse impact of traffic, the following objectives have been adopted for the Winchester Movement and Access Plan:

- To provide pleasant pedestrian areas with safe footways and road crossings, paying particular attention to the needs of people with mobility impairments;
- To reduce traffic in the central area by providing park and ride services operating from car parks located at strategic sites close to major access corridors on the outskirts of the town;
- To improve the efficiency and attractiveness of public transport by introducing bus priority measures so that buses become a viable and preferred option to the car;
- To reduce traffic speeds, accidents and manage demand through traffic management and environmental improvement schemes which provide a safer and more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists;
- To encourage more and safer cycling by providing a comprehensive network of on-road and off-road cycle routes serving the city centre, other key employment sites, schools and colleges;
- To provide better information to travellers through the introduction of intelligent transport systems which assist in managing the network, the management of transport demand and to provide travellers with real time information enabling them to make informed travel choices.

- 11.30 The Local Transport Plan sets out a detailed programme for the Winchester Movement and Access Plan for the period to 2006. It has also considered, in principle, the measures to be implemented over the period up to 2011, the period of this Plan.

Park and Ride

- 11.31 Park and Ride is an important part of the Winchester Movement and Access Plan strategy. It will reduce the number of people bringing their cars into central Winchester, resulting in significant environmental benefits. This will allow the implementation of measures to reduce the impact of the car in the town centre and reallocate road space in favour of public transport, walking and cycling.



"Park and Ride is an important part of the Winchester Movement and Access Plan"

Proposal W.3

Planning permission will be granted for Park and Ride car parks in or around Winchester, linked to the city centre by exclusive bus services with bus priority schemes, provided that:

- (i) the proposal would not be unduly intrusive or harmful to the special landscape setting of Winchester;*
- (ii) suitable means of access can be provided for cars and buses and any associated traffic management measures can be accommodated satisfactorily;*
- (iii) the development accords with Proposal DP.3 and other relevant proposals of this Plan.*

If schemes are proposed outside the policy boundary of Winchester, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that the benefits of the scheme outweigh conflicts with countryside or other proposals of the Plan. Only facilities essential to the satisfactory and successful operation of Park and Ride will be permitted in such locations.

A Park and Ride car park and associated infrastructure will be permitted at Bushfield Camp, in association with recreation development planned for this site (see Proposal W.2).

11.32 The Local Transport Plan has identified the need for an 800 to 1,000 space Park and Ride site to the south of Winchester and has bid for funding to complete the scheme by 2005. The Bushfield Camp Study and other assessments undertaken since have shown that Bushfield Camp is the most appropriate site for such a development and that this should preferably be undertaken in conjunction with the recreation development proposed (see proposal W.2). This will supplement the existing Park and Ride facility at Bar End and forms part of a long-term strategy of providing Park and Ride car parks on all the main radial routes into Winchester.

11.33 The Local Transport Plan has also identified the need to provide at least two further Park and Ride sites within the next 10 years. It suggests that a site in the Winnall area could serve traffic from the M3 Junction 9 and the area east of Winchester and another site to the north of the town could serve traffic from the A34 and Andover to the north. No specific locations have been identified at this stage.

11.34 It may not be possible to find suitable sites for Park and Ride car parks within the built-up area of the city. The Proposal, therefore, would allow for sites to be developed in areas subject to countryside policies, providing a strong justification for the provision is put forward, sufficient to outweigh other objections.

11.35 Particular account will be taken of the special landscape setting of Winchester and the need to avoid undue intrusion into it. For this reason, it is not likely that suitable sites will be identified in the Conservation Area or the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Where Park and Ride car parks have to be located in the countryside, the facilities provided should be limited to those essential for the successful operation of the scheme.

Town centre traffic management

Proposal W.4

In order to enable traffic management measures to be introduced to reduce motor traffic in the central area and eventually to eliminate most traffic from the area bounded by North Walls, Eastgate Street, the Kingsgate area and Sussex Street, development which would generate significant additional cross-town private vehicle traffic will not be permitted.

11.36 A key objective of the Winchester Movement and Access Plan is to reduce traffic volumes in central Winchester by providing additional Park and Ride facilities and other measures. This will lead to significant environmental improvements and allow the provision of additional bus priority measures and schemes to improve safety and amenity for pedestrians and cyclists. It is therefore important that new development in central Winchester does not generate significant additional volumes of vehicular traffic. Central Winchester does, however, offer a good opportunity for the provision of developments that can make full use of access by Park and Ride, public transport, walking and cycling to minimise the need for direct access by car.

Parking controls and servicing

Proposal W.5

In order to assist in reducing traffic flows in the town centre and to encourage the use of Park and Ride, particularly for long stay parking, the development of additional public car parks in Winchester will not be permitted, other than in accordance with Proposal W.3.

11.37 Car parking controls are an important part of the strategy to reduce vehicular activity in the town centre. Whilst car parking will continue to be provided, particularly for short stay uses such as shopping, the price structure and other controls will encourage the use of Park and Ride facilities as an alternative. Consequently, no additional public city centre car parks will be provided and some existing long stay car parking spaces will be withdrawn or converted to short-stay use as Park and Ride develops. Park and Ride car parks and associated bus services will be run as an integral part of the overall public parking service in the town.

11.38 Park and Ride is not intended to increase the stock of public parking in Winchester. Town centre parking, especially for long-stay use, will be managed to ensure that, overall, current levels of parking are maintained. In some cases individual car park layouts may be revised to reduce the number of spaces, and in other cases car parks may be redeveloped for a mix of uses, which may or may not include parking. The car parks that currently appear to have scope for redevelopment are Upper Brook Street, Middle Brook Street

(retaining short-stay parking), Chesil (surface), Durngate, Worthy Lane/Cattle Market, Gladstone Street and St Peters. Further studies will be undertaken to assess which, if any, should be redeveloped.

Proposal W.6

Residential development will be permitted in Winchester providing parking provision is limited to current standards. In the town centre in particular, minimal, if any, parking will be permitted on-site, taking account of the on-street parking situation in the area and the scope to control residents' parking.

Non-residential development (including redevelopment, extensions or changes of use) will be permitted providing parking provision does not exceed minimum operational levels and appropriate financial contributions are made to assist implementation of measures in the Winchester Movement and Access Plan.

11.39 The Hampshire Parking Strategy and Standards 2001 aim to minimise the amount of on-site parking in new developments, particularly where a site is well served or capable of being well served by public transport, walking and cycling. This is consistent with current Government policy. Within the central core of Winchester, a key objective of the Winchester Movement and Access Plan is to reduce traffic volumes. Minimising on-site parking provision in new developments is one of the ways that this can be achieved.

11.40 Although the Plan seeks to control public parking and future private non-residential parking, existing private non-residential parking comprises around half of all parking spaces in the town centre. The County and City Councils are working in partnership to encourage local employers to produce strategies for staff travel and car parking which discourage access to Winchester by car and encourage the use of public transport, car sharing, walking, cycling and Park and Ride.

11.41 Government policy encourages reduced levels of on-site parking provision in new residential developments and this is reflected in the Hampshire Parking Strategy and Standards 2001. For town centre sites the Government indicates that on-site parking provision



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should be reduced significantly. Therefore, within Winchester town centre, the Local Planning Authority will seek reduced levels of parking. The town centre, as referred to in Proposal W.6 is as defined by Proposal SF.1 (Chapter 8). Account will also be taken of accessibility to public transport and other factors, allowing applicants and the Local Planning Authority to agree satisfactory means of providing car parking by considering each site on its merits.

Proposal W.7

Commercial development will be permitted in Winchester provided that it is designed and located to minimise the impact of service vehicles.

11.42 The Local Planning and Highway Authorities will seek to minimise the need for large service vehicles in the town centre. However, this must be balanced against the requirement to maintain a vibrant retail and commercial centre and such developments by their nature will require servicing access. Any new development should provide adequate servicing arrangements where this is possible. In addition, the Highway Authority will continue to review controls on the timing of service deliveries and encourage new means of delivery. The Winchester Freight Forum will investigate the feasibility of a "trans-shipment depot" for the longer term.

Environmental traffic management

Proposal W.8

New development which accords with other relevant proposals of this Plan will be permitted in Winchester, provided that it does not conflict with environmental improvement schemes and traffic management measures proposed in the city centre.

11.43 In order to maximise the environmental benefits of the Winchester Movement and Access Plan's strategy, traffic calming and environmental improvement measures will be introduced on streets in the town centre.

Pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled

11.44 The Winchester Movement and Access Plan aims to improve road safety. The general proposals for traffic management and traffic calming will improve safety, comfort and

convenience for pedestrians in the town centre. In addition to these measures, the Planning and Highway Authorities will continue to monitor pedestrian flows on radial roads and provide suitable crossing facilities, where justified.

11.45 The Local Authorities will seek to provide, wherever possible and feasible, safe, convenient and pleasant conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Existing cycle routes in the town will be extended. The provision of cycle parking facilities in the town centre will also be considered with environmental improvement and development schemes in town centre streets. Short-term extensions to the cycle network are likely to be within existing public highways.

11.46 There is a reasonable footpath network in and around Winchester, although there are places where there is conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, for example, on City Bridge and in some of the narrower streets. There are a number of opportunities to provide attractive new footpaths or to improve conditions for pedestrians.

Proposal W.9

New footways/footpaths are proposed in the following locations:

- (i) from Jewry Street (north side of No. 28) to North Walls (west side of County Reference Library);*
- (ii) from Chesil Street to The Weirs;*
- (iii) from Water Close to Wolvesey Castle and The Weirs;*
- (iv) from Durngate westwards alongside the School of Art to North Walls Park;*
- (v) from Durngate Bridge along the east bank of the River Itchen to join with footpath No. 9 (completion of partial link).*

11.47 The aim of Proposal W.9 (i) is to achieve a footway link between Canister House in Jewry Street, to North Walls, adjacent to the Reference Library. This would provide a convenient route separated from vehicular traffic.

11.48 The proposed footpath from Chesil Street to The Weirs (Proposal W.9 [ii]) may be incorporated in any development or

redevelopment proposals, using the passage of No. 14 Chesil Street and crossing the River Itchen. Such a route would provide a safer alternative to City Bridge for pedestrians from the Chesil Car Park and properties in the area.

- 11.49 Proposal W.9 (iii) proposes a footpath from Water Close to the Castle and The Weirs, which would link the Castle and Cathedral areas with the River and provide an attractive and useful link, whilst avoiding the Bishop's residence.
- 11.50 The proposed footpath between Durngate and North Walls Park (W.9 [iv]) would provide an attractive and useful riverside walk around part of the edge of the town centre.
- 11.51 Much of the footpath link proposed between Durngate and footpath No.9 (Proposal W.9 [v]) exists already. The completion of the missing part, to the rear of commercial properties on Easton Lane, would extend this attractive riverside walk.

Proposal W.10

A new bridleway is proposed between Barfield Close, along the former railway line and viaduct, and alongside the Bushfield link road, to Bushfield roundabout.

- 11.52 A bridleway currently exists between Hockley and Garnier Road, running between the Itchen Navigation and the disused railway. The route is narrow in places, with potential for conflict between cyclists and horse riders. The proposed alternative route would create a safe cycling route into the town centre from Compton and Hockley, as well as a recreational route linking to the wider bridleway network. Although it is currently proposed to provide a route adjacent to the Bushfield link road, other alternative routes will be investigated.



"The Local Authority has worked closely with the Department of Health to establish a new use for the former Knowle Hospital buildings."