

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Examination Day 3.
Representation no.52087 - A R B Mechanical Engineering Limited.
Land north of Lower Chase Road, Waltham Chase.

1. The Spatial Planning Objectives set down in paragraph 2.34 of the Joint Core Strategy record the intention to *‘...encourage sustainable transport alternatives that reduce the use of the private car and enable people to live close to where they work or participate in activities’*. It surely follows that work-places should be promoted close to where new housing is proposed, to reduce the need to commute. The delivery of *‘about 250 dwellings’* in Waltham Chase is proposed by Joint Core Strategy Policy MTRA2 and the improvement of its employment role is a declared objective. It is submitted that the employment proposals for Waltham Chase are not in step with the level of residential development proposed.

2. Representation 52087 relates to a rectangular area of land (0.8 hectare) that lies at the northern edge of Waltham Chase, to the east of Winchester Road and north of Lower Chase Road. To the west stand two business premises (S & S Diesel Services; ARB Mechanical) and two detached dwellings. The northern and eastern boundaries of the site are clearly defined by trees and mature hedges and, as ten of the trees are the subject of Tree Preservation Order 2956, their long-term retention is assured. Vehicular access is achieved via Winchester Road.

3. The site is conveniently located for the use of four bus routes (Nos.7, 8, 17 and 69) that pass north-south along Winchester Road or east-west on Curdridge Lane/Forest Road. Services are available 0658-1916 hours to take passengers north to Winchester (via Bishops Waltham, Fair Oak and Twyford), south to Fareham (via Wickham), east to Petersfield (via Bishops Waltham) or west to Southampton. Such times are convenient for employees who would wish to take the bus to and from their work-place in this locality. By reason of its proximity to the built-up area of Waltham Chase and its bus connections to other settlements, this site is an accessible, sustainable location for employment development.

4. Proposals Map Inset 26 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review (WDLPR) shows this site beyond the northern edge of the Policy Boundary (H3) and within a Local Gap (CE2). Policy CE2 relates to *‘...locally important areas of open and undeveloped land’* that are seen to warrant particular attention because they *‘...preserve the separate identities of smaller settlements at risk of coalescence’*. It surely follows that if a proposal would *not* threaten the identity of a settlement and *not* generate the impression that two settlements were at risk of coalescence, no breach of Policy CE2 would occur. Map 32 of the WDLPR shows Winchester Road through Waltham Chase to be part of the ‘B3354/B2177 Corridor (T10)’. Policy T10 promised in 2006 that *‘Measures will be implemented along the B3354/B2177 corridor between Winchester and Wickham...to (i) improve public transport services and infrastructure; (ii) improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians; and (iii) improve road safety’*. The Cabinet of Winchester City Council came to the view in 2008 that Policy T10 need not be ‘saved’ because it was ‘No longer required’, as its proposals had been ‘Completed’. As public transport services, cycling/pedestrian facilities and road safety were completed between 2006 and 2008 along the B2177 through Waltham Chase, the sustainability of the settlement has been markedly improved.

5. Policy MTRA2 of the Joint Core Strategy re ‘Market Towns and Larger Villages’ records the City Council’s commitment to the *‘...evolution of the larger settlements in the Market Towns and Rural Area to maintain and improve their role and function and to meet a range of local development needs...There should be improvements to public transport provision, where possible, and development should be appropriate in scale and result in a more sustainable community by improving the balance between housing, employment and services...Existing facilities, services and employment provision should be*

retained or improved to serve the settlements and their catchment areas'. Waltham Chase is one of the six nominated settlements where '*...about 250 new homes*' are to be provided and it straddles the B2177, where a range of highway improvements was completed between 2006 and 2008.

6. Paragraph 7.4 of the Joint Core Strategy records Winchester City Council's view that '*The vision for the market towns and rural area is to support development that serves local needs in the most accessible and sustainable locations, promotes the vitality and viability of all communities and maintains their rural character and individual settlement identity*'. It is unrealistic to expect Waltham Chase to accommodate about 250 new homes and *improve* the balance between housing and employment without reviewing gap and settlement boundaries. There can be little doubt that, in light of the transportation improvements that were completed between 2006 and 2008, this site is one of the most sustainable locations in/about Waltham Chase and, contained as it is on two sides by Tree Preservation Order 2956, it is ideally placed to play a valued part in improvement of the balance that is required between housing and employment, without giving the impression that Waltham Chase is coalescing with Swanmore.

7. New dwellings are proposed at Morgan's Yard (30), Clewers Lane (60), Sandy Lane (60) and Forest Road (85). Although Morgans Yard is '*...one of the few significant employment sites in the village*', it is proposed to be *reduced* in size in order to facilitate expansion of St John the Baptist School and accommodate 30 dwellings. While paragraph 4.7.15 of the Part 2 document records recognition that '*...the disposition of the various uses...(at Morgans Yard)...does not make for the most effective use of the site*' (ie there are not actually many employment opportunities, given the area of the site), the Part 2 document simply calls for '*...a mix of uses that includes sufficient commercial uses to at least compensate for the loss of existing employment floorspace*'. As the existing floorspace at Morgans Yard does not represent effective use of the site, it is doubtful whether the replacement of that floorspace would *improve* the balance between housing and employment in Waltham Chase that the Core Strategy intends. The dismissive statement at 4.7.9 of the Submission - '*No new employment sites are needed*'- has no foundation. With 235 new dwellings proposed in Waltham Chase, consideration is needed for the allocation of land to achieve new employment opportunities.

8. The National Planning Policy Framework states that '*When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should...define boundaries clearly, using physical boundaries that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent*'. It is submitted that the TPO'd trees that stand on the north and east sides of the land north of Chase Road site constitute clear boundaries that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent and, in view of its sustainability advantages, this proposal to allocate the land for employment development is 'sound'.

9. It is submitted that the Part 2 Submission employment proposals for Waltham Chase are insufficient to improve the balance between housing and employment in accordance with Policy MTRA2 of the Core Strategy. Inspector Payne is respectfully requested to recommend to Winchester City Council that 0.8 hectare of land to the north of Chase Road, Waltham Chase should be allocated for employment purposes, to help redress the prospective imbalance that would result from the delivery of Policy WC1 (60 dwellings), Policy WC2 (30 dwellings), Policy WC3 (60 dwellings) and Policy WC4 (85 dwellings).