

Draft Winchester District Local Plan Part 2

Recommended Responses to Issues Raised

SMALLER VILLAGES AND RURAL AREA (excluding Botley Bypass)

Introduction

1. A summary of all the representations on the draft Local Plan relating directly to the Smaller Villages and Rural Area was presented to the Cabinet (Local Plan) Committee on 30 March 2014 – [report CAB2676\(LP\) Appendix 4](#). That report contains a full summary of comments by Local Plan policy/paragraph/map. Copies of all representations are available on the Council's web site: <http://documents.winchester.gov.uk/LPP2/Default.aspx>
2. Report CAB2676(LP) records the various issues raised in relation to different parts of the Plan. It responds to some of these but leaves others for further consideration. This report presents all the key issues raised in relation to the Smaller Villages and Rural Area section of the draft Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) and recommends responses on all of these, including any already subject to recommendations in CAB2676(LP). Representations concerning Botley Bypass and the adjoining land are now dealt with in the report on the South Hampshire Urban Areas.

Scale of Development / Housing Requirement

3. The amount of new housing development to be provided across the District, including the South Downs National Park, in the plan period to 2031 is established in Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1). There is a requirement of 2,500 dwellings for the 'Market Towns and Rural Area' (policy CP1) but all of this is allocated to the larger settlements specified in policy MTRA2. There is no housing requirement specified for any of the smaller settlements listed in policy MTRA3, or for the countryside, hence there is no need for allocation policies concerning housing development in the smaller villages and rural area. The Smaller Villages and Rural Area section of the LPP2 therefore includes text which explains this.
4. The approach to development in the "Other Settlements" of the Market Towns and Rural Area is set out in LPP1 Policy MTRA3 and is based on meeting local needs. The policy supports development in the named smaller settlements which have defined settlement boundaries, and as infilling within other named smaller settlements that don't have settlement boundaries. This policy also states that other development proposals may be supported to reinforce a settlement's role and function, to meet a community need or to realise local community aspirations, provided these are identified through a process which demonstrates clear community support.
5. Policy MTRA3 therefore allows development that meets local needs and is appropriate in scale and design to the settlement, but means that the initiative for development beyond that normally allowed by policy MTRA3 should come from the local community rather than developers and landowners. This approach, as reiterated in the Smaller Villages and Rural Area section of the LPP2, is specifically supported in comments made by Micheldever Parish Council and South Wonston Parish Council in particular.

6. This policy is supplemented by LPP1 policy CP4 regarding the granting of permission or allocation of 'exceptions sites' for affordable housing. As such, limited housing development to meet locally identified community needs can be allowed through LPP1 and does not need to be allocated in LPP2.

Settlement Boundaries and Gaps

7. There were no requests from Parish Councils or local communities to review the settlement boundaries where these exist at the smaller villages. The retention of existing boundaries is specifically supported by a private individual and the Compton Down Society. Similarly there were no requests from Parish Councils or local communities to review the boundaries of the designated Settlement Gaps where these exist between the smaller villages.
8. However a few developers and landowners made representations that the boundaries should be reviewed to accommodate a modest amount of development that would help sustain the services and facilities, taking opportunities for "rounding off". Some suggested specific instances or sites where changes should be made to accommodate development, which are set out below.
9. A comprehensive review of all MTRA3 settlement boundaries was not considered necessary for the purposes of the Local Plan, given the lack of any housing target for these villages. The Inspector's Report on Local Plan Part 1 refers to land allocations, site specific issues and gaps between settlements as being matters for Local Plan Part 2. While he was clear that it would be necessary to review MTRA2 settlement and gap boundaries, he did not suggest any review of these boundaries for MTRA3 settlements: *'This includes the review of all MTRA2 settlement and gap boundaries, taking account of the above, as part of a plan led approach, in accord with the NPPF'* (LPP1 Inspector's Report, paragraph 110). Therefore, boundaries have been reviewed in the MTRA2 settlements, as necessary to accommodate planned growth and to correct acknowledged anomalies. However there is no requirement to allocate sites for development at the MTRA3 settlements – indeed limited housing development to meet locally identified community needs can be allowed through LPP1 policies. Therefore it is not considered necessary to make any changes to their settlement boundaries or the defined Settlement Gaps between them.

Representations concerning Settlement Boundaries, Gaps and Omission Sites

10. A suggested 'logical rounding off' of a settlement proposed in one representation involves a small area of land at Knowle. The small site (0.15 hectares), with potential for access from Dean Villas, is bounded on three sides by the existing settlement boundary.
11. This site forms part of the larger triangle of land that separates Knowle from the proposed Welborne development in Fareham Borough and falls within the area identified by LPP1 Policy SH4 to be maintained as the Settlement Gap required by LPP1 Policy CP18 to protect the individual character and identity of those settlements. The Fareham Local Plan Part 3 Welborne Plan, adopted June 2015, also indicates this whole area as "potential suitable alternative natural greenspace and settlement gap in the Winchester District". Although the site referred to in this representation is small, no change to the Settlement Boundary or Gap is necessary or appropriate in this location.

12. Another representation suggests that the village of Hursley, with its 'good range of services and facilities and significant employment offering nearby (IBM)', should be identified as being able to accommodate some residential development beyond its existing settlement boundary. However, no specific site is suggested.
13. The approach to development set out in LPP1 Policy MTRA3 and paragraphs 4.10.1 - 4.10.10 of the Draft LPP2 indicates that appropriate development should be accommodated within settlement boundaries. The particular characteristics of Hursley do not justify a change to the policy status of the settlement or reference in the Plan to the possibility of development beyond its settlement boundary.
14. Representations submitted on behalf of the owner of the George Beckett Nurseries ask that the Settlement Gap between Southdown and Otterbourne is revised to exclude the Nurseries and the Old Police Cottage. It is suggested that this land does not meet the criteria set out in the text supporting LPP1 Policy CP18 regarding gaps. The representation argues that the Nursery does not perform an important role in separating the settlements either visually or physically as it is already developed land.
15. Policy CP18 actually states that "*only development that does not physically or visually diminish the gap will be allowed*". The principle of a Gap between Southdown and Otterbourne is established in LPP1 Policy CP18. In defining the detailed boundaries of Gaps, the approach adopted consistently across the District is to define all the land between the respective built-up areas. This approach is continued in the draft LPP2, even if it may be possible to argue that not every parcel of land within the defined area contributes to the Gap. The land referred to in this objection is outside the built-up area of Southdown and no site allocations are necessary in this area. This Gap is also very narrow in this location and the land referred to is considered to form an important part of the Gap. There is, therefore, no reason to review the Gap in this location or to depart from the consistent approach to defining Gaps, namely of making them contiguous with the boundaries of the built-up areas they separate.
16. Two representations have been made concerning the settlement boundary of Littleton. One suggests that the Settlement Boundary Review should also consider historic development that for some reason has previously been overlooked, such the properties along Chestnut Avenue and where Kennel Lane meets Main Road.
17. This area to the south of the village extends into the Winchester - Littleton Gap. The settlement boundary is currently drawn to include the more compact part of the village where development and redevelopment opportunities will be supported. As no site allocations are necessary at Littleton, amending the settlement boundary in this location would also require drawing back the area covered by the Settlement Gap which could harm the purpose of the Gap and reduce its size.
18. The other representation refers to the former Holmes & Sons Nursery, and is seeking a change to the wording of Policy DM1 to allow for redevelopment adjoining settlement boundaries. The site, which extends to about 2.8 hectares and includes polytunnels, storage buildings and hard standing, was issued with a Certificate of Lawfulness in 2007 and 2008 as a depot and for B8 use and the representation suggests it could accommodate a mixed use scheme comprising a range of dwelling types and sizes (including affordable housing), employment, open space and landscaping. Littleton is described by the objector as a thriving community of about 1400 inhabitants with a good range of local services and facilities (church, village hall,

public house, sports and recreation ground, pre-school group) and is linked to services and facilities in Winchester by a high frequency bus service. The representation considers that redevelopment of previously developed land on the edge of a highly accessible village is clearly a form of sustainable development and is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

19. However, as sufficient land has been identified to accommodate the development required over the Plan period, there is no need to identify additional land outside of Winchester or the market towns and larger villages. Settlement boundaries are an established and widely-used means of defining where development may take place in principle, and protecting the integrity of the countryside from unnecessary development. This accords with the principles of sustainable development as outlined in the adopted strategy for development in the District in Policy DS1 of Local Plan Part 1 and there is no conflict with the NPPF. For the same reason it is not necessary that the Littleton settlement boundary be amended to include the former nursery.

Conclusion regarding Settlement Boundaries, Gaps and Omission Sites

20. A number of the representations refer to consideration of the settlement boundaries and gaps by the Inspector for LPP1 who stated regarding site specific issues being matters for LPP2 that this consideration *“includes the review of all MTRA2 settlement and gap boundaries...”* However, this clearly relates only to policy MTRA2 settlements and, when considering Policy MTRA3, he stated: *“in the absence of any strategic need for new housing in the smaller settlements, or the wider countryside to which policy MTRA4 applies, there is no assumption that existing boundaries there would need to be reviewed.”* The settlement boundary review has followed this recommendation: that there is no need to review the settlement boundaries for the MTRA3 villages and consequentially no need to review the gap boundaries.

Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

21. One representation from a member of the public suggests that Carousel Park should be considered for a permanent traveller's site as it is far enough away from anywhere to not impact negatively on any local communities.
22. Carousel Park near Micheldever has planning consent for use as a site for Travelling Showpeople and has been confirmed as such in a High Court judgement. Based on the conclusions of the 2013 Travellers Accommodation Assessment for Hampshire there is a need for about 11 additional travelling showpeople's pitches for the period 2012 – 2031.
23. A representation made on behalf of a resident of the Travelling Showperson's site at The Nurseries, Shedfield claims that the LPP2 fails to meet the tests of soundness because no allocation is proposed to take account of the needs of Travelling Showpeople as set out in the Travellers Accommodation Assessment. The representation also claims that a criteria-based policy, as set out in Policy CP5 of the LPP1 and draft LPP2 Policy DM4, are ineffective in meeting these accommodation needs as evidenced by the respondent's case where only temporary planning consent has been granted and renewed.
24. A Joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Assessment Study was commissioned in conjunction with the South Downs National Park Authority and East

Hampshire District Council. The Study aims to consider and review possible sites for potential inclusion as allocations to meet the needs set out in the Accommodation Assessment. However the Study has not been completed in time for sites to be included within the LPP2. This issue will therefore be considered through a separate development plan document (DPD) when the ongoing site assessment study is completed, the outcome of which will be reported to a future meeting; therefore no change is required to the LPP2 to allocate sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (but see also the report on Development Management policies in relation to policy DM4 on travellers).

Long Distance Rights of Way

25. The Local Plan Review (2006) contained some policies relating to the development of rural rights of way which have either expired or were not saved when LPP1 was adopted. Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority is responsible for public rights of way and has updated the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan for the period 2015-2025. This sets out objectives, to focus resources on routes which provide the most benefit to residents, visitors and the local economy and to work with others to identify a strategic network of routes which incorporates key links between centres of population and places of interest in the Hampshire Countryside. However it contains only broad actions and not specific proposals.
26. The LPP2 reference to initiatives to create new long distance rights of way along former railway lines is supported by a number of respondents including the South Downs National Park Authority and South Wonston Parish Council. However, with no indication of how and when they may be fully funded, the schemes remain desirable but are not deliverable with any certainty at present, so cannot be subject to a specific policy or shown on the policies map. If the former railway lines can be opened up as multi-user trails - for walking, cycling and horse riding - there is greater potential to secure funding for them as sustainable transport links as well as recreational routes. Minor changes to the Plan text are proposed to cover this.

Other Issues

27. Some comments have been made regarding different types of open spaces to be protected through designation under Policy DM5 and their inclusion on, or omission from, the Policies Map. Specific instances relate to Otterbourne and South Wonston. The Open Space Strategy has been reviewed and recommendations regarding which open spaces should be protected under Policy DM5 are considered under the Development Management section of the Plan and are covered in a separate report.

Appendix 1 – Proposed Changes to Local Plan Part 2

4.10 THE SMALLER VILLAGES & RURAL AREA

Smaller Villages

- 4.10.1 The policy for development in those villages not dealt with in sections 4.1 – 4.9 above is established in LPP1 (policy MTRA3). That policy does not set housing targets for these villages, nor envisage that their settlement boundaries will be reviewed, but includes provision for local communities to identify needs or aspirations which may require development that does not fall within the normal provisions of MTRA3. ~~Where this is the case there is an opportunity for these to be reflected in Local Plan Part 2.~~ The policies of LPP1 and this Plan which apply to the smaller villages and rural area will enable modest levels of housing and other development to take place, providing an added level of flexibility to contribute to the Local Plan's housing requirements.
- ~~4.10.2 At the start of work on LPP2 all Parish Councils were notified of the opportunity to review their development needs and settlement boundaries and put forward suggestions through the LPP2 process. The only MTRA3 village that responded in detail was Otterbourne, suggesting that other villages were content to rely on MTRA3 and its provisions for local needs to be identified and accommodated.~~
- 4.10.3 ~~Otterbourne Parish Council undertook work to assess its housing, employment and other needs and agreed a report setting out its conclusions in September 2013. This took account of evidence from the 2011 Census and other sources, as well as the results of public consultation. The report concluded that policy MTRA3 was appropriate for Otterbourne and that housing needs were modest and related to types of housing that could be provided within the settlement boundary or on exception sites (LPP1 policy CP4), rather than needing a change to the settlement boundary. No need for additional business development was identified, other than for small-scale local facilities, particularly health provision. Indeed, there were substantial concerns about the impact, particularly from traffic, of existing commercial sites within or adjoining the Parish, and opposition to their expansion. The key infrastructure improvements sought were in relation to footpaths and pavements, provision of a GP surgery, and more open space.~~
- 4.10.4 Therefore, no changes ~~are proposed~~ have been made to the settlement boundaries of those settlements within the Plan area that are subject to policy MTRA3. The policy provides for additional development in all the smaller settlements where it would meet a community need and has its clear support. Early experience of this provision suggests there is a risk of it being used by landowners or developers to put pressure on communities to support developments that they have not identified a need for, or initiated. This is not the intention of the policy and, in applying it, the local planning authority will expect to see evidence that any community needs and benefits that are claimed for a proposal have been instigated by the local community or clearly identified through their Neighbourhood Plan, Parish Plan, or similar process.

The Rural Area

- 4.10.5 The area outside defined settlement boundaries and the infilling provisions of policy MTRA3 is defined as countryside and subject to policy MTRA4 of Local Plan Part 1. This limits development to that which has an operational need for a countryside location, the reuse of existing buildings for certain uses (and their redevelopment in some cases), or small-scale tourist accommodation. The Development Management policies (Chapter 6) amplify this policy in relation to specific types of development, e.g. agricultural workers' dwellings. Policy MTRA5 provides for masterplans to be produced to enable the retention and development of ~~seven~~ several specific large establishments in the countryside.
- ~~4.10.6 The Local Plan Review 2006 contained several policies relating to the safeguarding of transport routes or the development of rural rights of way. These have been reviewed and no specific proposals or reservations of land or routes are including in this Plan. However, there are some proposals which warrant mention, as follows:~~
- ~~● Botley Bypass~~
 - ~~● Development of long distance rights of way, particularly along former railway lines.~~
- ~~4.10.7 The Local Plan Review (2006) safeguards land for the construction of an east-west bypass for Botley, between the District boundary with Eastleigh Borough and the A334/A3051 junction. Advice from the Highway Authority (Hampshire County Council) states that there is no technical justification which supports the need for a bypass. Nevertheless, the emerging Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2011-2029) includes a proposal for that part of Botley bypass within Eastleigh Borough. The City Council is subject to the 'Duty to Cooperate' with both the Highway Authority and adjoining local authorities.~~
- ~~4.10.8 The City Council has discussed the requirement for a bypass around Botley with Eastleigh Borough Council and has made representations on Eastleigh's emerging Local Plan questioning the justification for the bypass reservation and whether it will be taken up within the plan period. The views of the City Council, Highway Authority and others will be considered when the Eastleigh Local Plan is examined and the subsequent Inspector's report is expected to be available in time to be taken into account by this Local Plan. In the short term, the land will continue to be safeguarded by the 'saved' policy of the Local Plan Review 2006 until that is replaced by the Local Plan Part 2. In the longer term there is scope to either carry forward the safeguarding in this Plan, or to protect the route of a possible bypass through the application of the Local Plan's countryside policies. Therefore, it is not currently proposed to safeguard the bypass through this Plan but there is scope to do so if it is included in the Eastleigh Local Plan following the Public Examination, or if the scheme is supported by the Highway Authority.~~
- ~~4.10.9 The Local Plan Review 2006 also encouraged improvements to the rights of way network, either generally or through specific proposals for former railway lines in the Meon Valley and between Kings Worthy and South Wonston. In addition, other initiatives for rural rights of way have been brought forward more recently.~~

~~N~~ While no specific proposals are made for rural rights of way, including those identified in previous Local Plans, carried forward as they have either been implemented, are being brought forward by other means, or would not have sufficient prospect of delivery to justify a proposal in this Plan.

4.10.10 ~~However,~~ the City Council supports the improvement of the rural rights of way network, which is consistent with its policies on green infrastructure and other strategies. In particular, it recognises the potential offered by former railway lines for walking, cycling and horse riding, as sustainable transport and recreational routes, and welcomes the initiatives being promoted to bring the following into use:

- Bishops Waltham to Botley ~~footpath~~ multi-user trail along the former railway line;
- The 'Watercress Way' along the former railway line between Alresford and Kings Worthy and on to South Wonston and Wonston;
- Missing links between Wickham and Fareham along the former railway line and around Knowle and Welborne.