



Ms Elizabeth Billingham  
Clerk to Hursley Parish Council  
7 Chapel Road  
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Your Ref:  
Our ref: SO/HNP  
Contact: Steve Opacic  
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15 January 2021

Dear Ms Billingham,

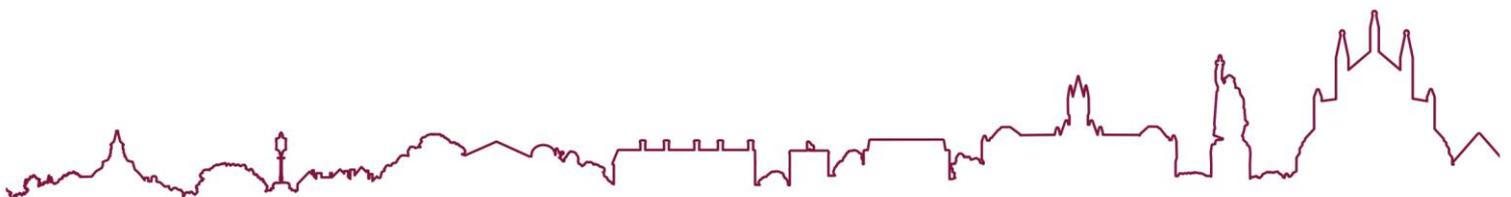
**Request to Winchester City Council to designate Hursley Parish as a Neighbourhood Area**

I refer to your letter dated 25 November 2020 requesting the designation of Hursley Parish as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of the Hursley Neighbourhood Plan (submitted by email from David Kileen on 26 Nov). My colleague Adrian Fox and I had an online meeting with the Neighbourhood Plan Start-up Team on 17 December, which I hope was useful.

As we explained, the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations have been amended with the effect that the City Council must designate a Neighbourhood Area which is proposed by a Parish Council and which covers the whole of its Parish (Regulation 5A, Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012). Accordingly, the City Council hereby **designates Hursley Parish as a Neighbourhood Area** for the purposes of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. The above Regulations also specify that the normal consultation and publicity arrangements for designating a Neighbourhood Area do not need to be followed in these circumstances, although the City Council will put details of your request on its website and notify adjoining authorities.

You will be aware that a future Neighbourhood Plan must be subject to independent examination to ensure compliance with a series of '*basic conditions*'. These include a requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the '*Development Plan*'. The Development Plan in relation to Hursley Parish currently consists of the Winchester District Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2), the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpersons' Development Plan Document and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

These plans include the '*strategic policies*' with which the Neighbourhood Plan will need to comply and Government guidance in the National Planning Policy



Framework (NPPF) refers to planning authorities providing a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations (NPPF paragraph 65). Under the current strategic policies there are no specific requirements for housing or other development in Hursley Parish, as housing and other allocations are made elsewhere. A key policy is Local Plan Part 1 policy MTRA3 which defines a settlement boundary for Hursley village and for Winchester and Oliver's Battery, which immediately adjoin the Parish. The NPPF advises (paragraph 69) that Neighbourhood Plans *'should also consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites (of a size consistent with paragraph 68a) suitable for housing in their area'* (paragraph 68a refers to sites no larger than 1 hectare).

In view of the above policies and guidance, there is currently no housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to provide. Policy MTRA3 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. These should be identified through a Neighbourhood Plan...'*. Therefore, the City Council would advise that the Neighbourhood Plan may, but is not required to, promote small or medium scale development (up to 1 hectare) to meet local needs and aspirations. This is likely to be within or adjoining Hursley village and could involve amendments to the current settlement boundary, if approved through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The City Council is working on an updated Local Plan which will set out new strategic policies to meet future housing and other development needs. This is likely to require additional development allocations and the City Council plans to consult on a *'Strategic Issues and Priorities'* document in February, following consideration by the Local Plan Advisory Group and Cabinet in January 2021. Owing to the fact that the boundary of Hursley Parish adjoins Winchester, some of the options that could be put forward as part of the consultation process on the Strategic Issues & Priorities document might potentially result in a future need for additional development within Hursley Parish and these would be progressed through the new Local Plan process. I must reiterate that no decision has as yet been taken on this. With this in mind, confusion may result given the different timescales for the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan, so in terms of clarity, public understanding of the respective plan processes, and consistency with the NPPF, the City Council considers that the Neighbourhood Plan should limit itself to dealing with non-strategic scale developments and should not seek to either promote or resist strategic-scale sites. Whether these are necessary and suitable should be considered at the strategic scale, through the Local Plan process.

Similarly, whilst I am aware of the Parish Council's views on a Green Belt, this would have wide-ranging implications and could not be designated through a Neighbourhood Plan. Also, new or amended designations which are by their very

nature strategic issues such as settlement gaps, landscape designations, etc. should not be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Obviously the Parish Council and local residents can suggest such matters through the Local Plan process if they wish.

As mentioned at our online meeting, Adrian and I would be happy to discuss any matters arising as you work through the Neighbourhood Plan process and advise as necessary. It may also be useful to touch base every month or two to update each other on progress of the Neighbourhood Plan and new Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Opacic', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Steve Opacic**  
Strategic Planning Projects Officer

c.c. David Killeen,  
Chris Beddoes,  
Mike Watts,  
Jan Warwick  
Steve Lees (Consultant)  
Adrian Fox (WCC)