

## **Further Statement on Market Towns and Rural Areas Policies MTRA 1-5**

In my previous objection to the JCS Local Plan Part 1 of Winchester City Council I stated that I find Policy MTRA2 with respect of the allocation of 150-250 new houses for Wickham to be unjustified and unsound.

In response to the Inspector's questions I find this policy unjustified in relation to the NPPF and social impact again with specific regard to Wickham's allocation. In addition I find the categorisation of Wickham to be unsuitable and inappropriate and request that the JCS takes account of the future anticipated future development and economic changes in the immediate area and reduces Wickham's allocation to a lower figure.

My reasons for this are that immediately adjoining the southern border of Wickham plans for a new town known as the North Fareham Strategic Development Area of up to 7,500 homes are well advanced. It is very likely that this large development (in Fareham Borough Council's area) will go ahead and the future completion of this new town will have an enormous social and economic impact on the Market Town of Wickham. It will also meet of course many of Wickham's local employment and housing needs but will take away most of the green countryside to the south of the village.

Wickham therefore does not want any more large surrounding countryside areas to be built upon and wants to retain its rural nature. There are not enough suitable sites within the village to accommodate 150-250 extra houses so most of any such allocated development would have to be on the countryside to the north, north-west or east. Most of the countryside to the south will be taken up by the proposed SDA. Wickham residents indicated quite clearly to Winchester City Council in their Blueprint consultations Plans for Places 2011 that they did not wish to accept a higher number of new houses as did the Wickham Parish Council and the Wickham Society in their consultations.

These views have not been taken account of in Policy MTRA2 which allocates Wickham a larger number for new homes along with Swanmore, Waltham Chase, Colden Common, Denmead and Kingsworthy. None of the other settlements mentioned here face the challenge of a new town of 7,500 homes right on its border and no other settlement to my knowledge produced the same strength of objections as Wickham. This policy therefore goes against the strongly expressed and documented local views and is against the spirit of localism.

The JCS states a need for 1,500 homes in the Rural Areas. With an allocation of 400/500 new homes for Bishops Waltham and Alresford and 150-250 homes for the 6 other settlements these totals add up to a figure in excess of the requirements even if the lower figures are taken so there would be no need for Wickham to accept such a high number. Wickham is the smallest 'market town' within the District and has always considered itself to be a village.

Wickham residents are of course aware of developers waiting to put in planning applications for the 150-250 houses in the countryside to be built in one tranche rather than being phased over the plan period. Developers' arguments are that such a large number of houses require infrastructure from the outset which would mean the necessity of building all of the planned development in one go. A lower allocated number would

mean that the new houses could be phased gradually over the plan period. Also there will be arguments that the Council does not have a 5 year land supply of housing which justifies such development. This will be resolved once the JCS is in place. Planning applications will of course be controlled by the City Council's planning system but the allocation of a higher number for Wickham will place the surrounding countryside more at risk of being developed sooner rather than over the plan period.

I respectfully request that the Inspector takes account of the special position that Wickham finds itself in with the proposed North Fareham SDA right on its boundary to the south, the fact that the current JCS allocation would mean even more building on the surrounding countryside and of the stated wishes and needs of the local residents that the village would be best served by a reduced allocation of new houses.

Therese Evans, WCC councillor for Wickham Ward. September 29<sup>th</sup> 2012