

Project_Winnall Planning Framework

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Subject_ Policy Plan Commentary

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Notes

This note provides a description of the proposed policy areas taken from the Winnall Planning Framework Final Report together with a commentary on the proposed policy area boundaries. The Winnall Planning Framework Final Report (June 2015) was prepared for Winchester City Council by Parsons Brinckerhoff and Outdesign Ltd.

Please refer to drawing nr. Out_16_01 Local Policy Plan.

Moorside Road: 'core' employment area

3.2.4 The northern part of the industrial estate, largely based around Moorside Road, is currently a focus for larger businesses and employers. It is a vibrant and active business area with few vacancies but where B1, B2 and B8 employment activities, including Sui Generis uses, are encroaching. Policy CP9 of the Local Plan, which seeks to retain and protect employment land and premises, needs reinforcing in this area. An 'employment first' approach should be taken that restricts other uses, including those classed as Sui Generis, from locating here, unless there are clear and justifiable policy reasons to suggest otherwise.

3.2.5 Many of the units in this area are insular and there are no supporting facilities or recreational spaces, such as meeting and conference facilities or cafes, that are provided in many contemporary employment areas and which could strengthen this as a place to invest, to retain skills and business activities. This area would benefit from a new hub which could become a focal point around which new meeting spaces and other support functions, such as places to eat and relax could be provided. The new hub could also include flexible workspace and incubator units to meet the needs of medium size businesses and also attract new industries into the area, including those in the creative and cultural industries. Such a facility would contribute to upgrading the image of the area, and reinforce perceptions of this as a good place to work and locate a business.

3.2.6 At the centre of the Moorside Road area are a cluster of Victorian buildings, which appear to have previously been associated with the former railway running through the area. These buildings could be celebrated as an asset to the area, and through sensitive long term redevelopment could be transformed into the Moorside Road hub.

This site also represents an opportune location, as the redevelopment of the site would offer the chance to provide a new link connecting Moorside Road to Leicester Way, unblocking problems associated with the cul-de-sac nature of Moorside Road at present. In addition, any proposal on the site should be encouraged to explore the potential to enhance the visual connection to the moors (with the very strong proviso that there is no detrimental impact on the quality of the landscape and biodiversity of the moors and National Park).

Moorside Road 'core' employment area is located between the A34 and Winnall Moors. Easton Lane currently forms its southern boundary. The proposed policy boundary retains the western and eastern extents of the employment area. The southern boundary is drawn to the north of existing retail and trade businesses which front onto Easton Lane and Erasmus Park student village.

Easton Lane: 'Civic Boulevard'

3.2.7 Around half of all premises in the industrial estate are in retail and trade use, and most of these are located along or off Easton Lane. This is generally accepted as a relatively good location for these types of activities given visibility, accessibility and compatibility with surrounding use types. However, these uses are spreading and leaking into employment areas beyond the immediate Easton Lane frontage, with some being found along Moorside Road. It is suggested that Easton Lane is defined as a retail and trade corridor where B1, B2 and B8 uses are permitted (subject to compliance with other policies in the Local Plan), although this should not preclude employment uses coming forward in this location either, so long as they help contribute to the aspirations for Easton Lane. This corridor should extend as far back as one block either side of Easton Lane and only include the land and premises falling within this. Retail and trade employment uses should be restricted outside of this area.

3.2.8 Alongside this, longer term enhancements to the appearance of Easton Lane should be promoted. The concept of a 'civic boulevard' is promoted. The components of this are:

- As and when opportunities for development come forward buildings should be reconfigured to actively front Easton Lane.
- A strong and consistent building line should be encouraged, providing uniformity along the street.
- Visual narrowing of the carriageway through street design, materials, tree planting and use of central medians to reduce speed and improve the ease of which pedestrians and cyclists can cross Easton Lane.
- Increase the width of the footways along Easton Lane, improving the pedestrian environment and ease of which people, of all ages, can walk along this and into the City Centre.
- Promote new segregated cycle facilities alongside Easton Lane, allowing safe conditions for people of all ages free of traffic.
- Promote the reconfiguration of key junctions along Easton Lane, including that with Winnall Manor Road, to address congestion and provide crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Incorporate landscaping along a reconfiguration of Easton Lane.

The proposed policy boundary for the Easton Lane 'Corridor' includes those retail and trade businesses currently fronting on to Easton Lane to the north and the Erasmus Park student village. To the south the proposed boundary includes Tesco's superstore, Winchester Road Park, Winchester Fire Station and adjacent businesses, Caledonia House Hotel (Premier Inn) and the car show rooms and businesses to the north of the dismantled rail line.

Winnall Valley Road: A location for SMEs and Start-ups

3.2.10 The businesses along Winnall Valley Road comprise a cluster of smaller organisations and start-ups and include a mix of manufacturing, light industrial and office based research and consultancy services within managed office space. It is a diverse and dynamic area providing an 'entry' location for new businesses as well as longer established local organisations. The success of Basepoint demonstrates the demand for good quality managed office space across Winchester. More space akin to this is needed in Winchester to stop new business start-ups locating elsewhere.

Winnall Valley Road could be promoted as a location for this type of space, responding both to demand but also to its setting adjacent to the residential neighbourhood.

3.2.11 It is suggested that land along Winnall Valley Road should be protected for employment uses (classes B1, B2 and B8) and that proposals for other uses should be restricted. If sites become available for redevelopment and reuse then opportunities to provide space for smaller businesses and start-ups should be explored in the first instance. Proposals for other uses, particularly residential, should not be permitted as they could undermine the ambitions to see a more diverse economic base in Winchester with greater opportunities for local people to be involved in the creation of economic diversity, which is a key plank of the Winchester town-wide vision (The Vision for Winchester Town, 2012-2017).

3.2.12 The currently vacant site on the junction of Winnall Valley Road and Winnall Manor Road has the potential to provide new employment space for start-up businesses, similar to that provided by Basepoint. The topography of the site provides scope to address parking on-site through under-croft provision, with a strong building frontage on Winnall Manor Road contributing to an improved townscape and gateway between employment and residential areas. We would also suggest that this site could incorporate a hub facility of some sort. Similar to that suggested within the Moorside Road area, the businesses on Winnall Valley Road (and nearby) are poorly served by supporting facilities and services. A meeting space and café, associated with general improvements to the quality of the street environment, could contribute to the attractiveness of this area as a place to invest.

3.2.13 Further along Winnall Valley Road is the Council's youth centre (KAYAC). This facility is no longer fit for purpose and, although funding has been made available for repair and refurbishment, a new replacement facility will be needed in the longer term. Opportunities for relocation should be explored within the area. When this happens, it is suggested that this site is redeveloped to provide space for smaller businesses, including incubator space for new sectors, such as the creative and cultural industries. Potential locations for a replacement youth centre are explored further in the Living in Winnall theme, though scope may exist to explore how this could be reprovided as part of any longer term restructuring of employment land backing onto Imber Road Park.

The proposed boundary for Winnall Valley Road / Winnall Close area includes all the businesses accessed from Winnall Valley Road and those properties fronting onto Winnall Manor Road to the south of Caledonia House Hotel. This policy area also includes those businesses accessed from Winnall Close including the Royal Mail delivery Centre, the Cavendish Centre and Sun Valley Business Park.

Wider opportunities in the employment area: (1) Nickel Close / Easton Lane

3.2.18 Located to the southern end of Easton Lane and somewhat disjointed from the core employment area is the cluster of activities around Nickel Close. This comprises a range of different uses, including office space, trade / retail, car sales, workshops and studios. It is a vibrant area with few vacancies. It however lacks cohesiveness. The

four main areas comprising the cluster of activity here are poorly related to each other and are, to different degrees, all somewhat inward looking. The quality of the environment and building stock also varies: it is better on the northern side of Easton Lane where the premises are well relatively well maintained. To the south of Easton Lane however, the Easton Lane Business Park and workshop spaces adjacent to this are of a lower quality, with a poor and unwelcoming street environment, dated buildings, poor access arrangements and limited circulation space. These uses are though surrounded by homes, including a recently completed small development of homes on Easton Lane, the Imber Road Park and green links through to the moors and National Park. This green infrastructure presents a form of transition between the core employment area and residential neighbourhood.

3.2.19 This is an area which might come under pressure in the future for change and development. It is suggested that any change here accords with general policies and principles established in Local Plan Part 1 with regard to scale and use and is considered on its merits. However, any change here, whether it is for employment or other uses deemed appropriate, should be structure in such a way that responds to the park environment. The Council could also work in partnership with landowners and developers to explore the potential reprovision of the youth centre (KAYAC) on

Winnall Valley Road to this location. This might involve some sort of land swap, with new or replacement employment activities provided on Winnall Valley Road. Should the youth centre be located here then it should be placed to provide an active frontage to the Imber Road Park, enhancing the quality and safety of that space through overlooking, natural surveillance and regular activity. Such a location would be more accessible to the surrounding community.

The proposed boundary for this policy area includes all the existing properties within Nickel Close and Easton Lane Business Park.