

Local Plan Part 2 Winchester City Council (WCC) meeting with Wickham Parish council

22 February 2013

Attendance:

Therese Evans (TE) , Angela Clear (AC), Marie Du Boulay (MDB), Nicki Oliver (NO), Steve Opacic (SO)

Update on Local Plan Part 1 (Joint core Strategy)

SO gave an update on the progress of Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1), in particular the Inspector's report which was produced on 11 February. This recommends that the overall District housing target should be raised to 12,500 dwellings, with the increase being achieved by using a single requirement for the MTRA settlements (at the top of the former range) and adding 500 to North Whiteley. This means that the requirement for Wickham is 250 dwellings from 2011-2031. However, the Inspector was clear that this should be planned through Local Plan Part 2 and he supported other important policies, including affordable housing, Gaps, etc.

There was discussion about whether developers would be able to pressure the PC to support certain sites or put in 'pre-emptive' planning applications. SO felt the Inspector's Report puts WCC and the PC in a very strong position as he supported retaining existing settlement boundaries until they go through a proper review process (LLPP2 or Neighbourhood Plans). Also, WCC believe they can show an adequate housing land supply, so do not feel vulnerable to speculative applications/appeals (but noting that they could not prevent someone from making a planning application). Therefore, SO felt the PC could reject claims by developer/landowners that their sites need to be brought forward early and WCC would support this.

There was some discussion of whether the requirements for different settlements were fair or balanced but, as they relate to matters of 'soundness', the City Council has to accept the Inspector's recommendations if it wants to adopt the Plan. There will be a report to Cabinet on 13 March proposing that the Inspector's recommendations be accepted and the Plan be adopted and this will subsequently be considered by full Council (special meeting since arranged for 20 March).

Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2)

MDB gave an update on the work the Parish Council is doing to feed into LPP2. A list of stakeholders has been produced and people will be asked to work on various parts of the WCC templates. The aim is to complete the templates and then move onto the site assessment checklist. A meeting is planned with all local societies (16 April) and they will be asked to feed back to their groups/members and respond by mid-May. A large consultation event is now planned for 27 June (evening), but the details will need to be finalised nearer the time.

The group looked at and discussed each of the three WCC templates in turn, also referring to and clarifying as necessary the Wickham Data Sets:

Housing: This now included the Inspector's recommended target of 250 dwellings, of which 24 had been built or permitted since April 2011. TE would be looking at affordable

housing needs and AC would be talking to local estate agents. SO said that the assessment of gypsy and traveller needs was nearing completion, recognising that this makes it difficult to look for sites at the moment (but should assume that 1 or 2 sites of about 5 pitches each may be needed).

SO said that WCC would be doing some work on possible 'windfall' allowances (assumptions for the amount of housing that may be developed on unidentified sites within the settlement boundary). It was agreed that the Parish Council would put forward suggestions for sites within the settlement boundary which they feel may have development potential and which should, therefore, be taken into account.

Employment/Jobs: AC will be talking to local traders and would update the list of which shops/services are present in the village centre. SO said it would be good to map this, which would help in defining whether the 'Primary Shopping Frontages' were still needed and where they should apply. It would also be necessary to review the 'Town Centre Boundary' (covering the area where most businesses are concentrated).

AC would also investigate the different types of business sites/units in Wickham. SO explained the meaning/source of some of the information.

Community & Social Infrastructure: SO said he would welcome any corrections/updates to the list of facilities present/absent in Wickham, as set out in the template. The event planned for local societies should be useful in helping to determine whether provision for various facilities was in surplus/shortfall. SO said that WCC would contact Southern Water to try to get a clear position in relation to drainage issues and what the implications are for the amount/timing of development.

There was a discussion of whether the 250 houses could be phased so as to get an even level of delivery, rather than all in the first few years. SO said that there needed to be a clear planning justification for this, e.g. a need to provide/improve a particular item of infrastructure before more than x houses can be built. Wickham was 'fortunate' in that the drainage issue may warrant some phasing measures, but WCC would be reliant on S Water to demonstrate that housing should be delayed, if this was their advice.

SO said that WCC would be meeting HCC Education officers to establish the situation regarding local schools. Sue Roger-Jones was also looking into this locally. MDB would be talking to health providers locally about capacity. SO said that WCC's Stuart Dunbar-Dempsey was in the process of applying the new (higher) Local Plan Part 1 open space standards to the larger settlements and should have talked to the PC about provision locally. The results of this would be available shortly.

SO explained that it was likely that the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule would be agreed by the end of 2013. Once CIL is brought in (or from April 2014 if it hadn't already been brought in) the scope of S106 obligations would be severely cut back to avoid any double-charging of developers ('double-dipping'). CIL would effectively be a tax on qualifying development (mainly housing but excluding affordable units) based on a sum per square metre of floorspace (proposed to be £80/sqm). WCC had to produce a 'Regulation 123 list' to show what it would spend the funds on, to demonstrate wasn't 'double-dipping'.

SO said that recent Government announcements had clarified that 15% of CIL receipts would be returned to the community (Parish Council) in which development takes place, for them to allocate to local infrastructure projects as they see fit. This isn't subject to the Reg123 list or WCC control. Because of the limitations that would be imposed on S106 obligations, it is unlikely to be possible to secure more from a development than is needed to meet the needs it generates. Therefore, care needs to be exercised when taking account of offers of infrastructure, open space, etc by landowners, as it may actually be illegal for WCC to enter into S106 agreements to achieve them.

SO concluded by saying that the aim was to complete and agree the templates jointly with the PC and, once they were agreed, they could be put on the part of the LPP2 website that would be created, with sections dedicated to Wickham and the other main MTRA settlements. Other material would be uploaded here as work progressed.

The next meeting was scheduled for 2pm, 22 May at Wickham Community Centre.