

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	14 March 2013
By	Director of Planning
Title of Report	Adoption of the Winchester Joint Core Strategy (Winchester District Local Plan Part One)
Purpose of Report	To inform Members of the Planning Committee of the outcome of the Examination of the Joint Core Strategy and the recommendations of the Planning Inspector's report and seek their recommendation to the National Park Authority to adopt the Winchester Joint Core Strategy.

Recommendation: the Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Recommend to the National Park Authority that the Winchester Joint Core Strategy (Winchester District Local Plan Part One) be adopted, subject to the decision of Winchester City Council, and for any decisions regarding non-material minor amendments that may arise from Winchester City Council's decision to be delegated to the Director of Planning for agreement.**

1. Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 The Inspector's final Report on the Examination of the Winchester Joint Core Strategy (Winchester District Local Plan Part I) was received on 11 February 2013. The Inspector recommends Main Modifications (MM) to the document, which, if included would make the document legally sound and would enable the formal adoption of the document by both the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and Winchester City Council (WCC).
- 1.2 This report summarises the Joint Core Strategy policies, the examination process and the modifications recommended by the Inspector. It also sets out the process of adoption by both the SDNPA and WCC. Once adopted the Joint Core Strategy will be part of the Development Plan for Winchester District, although relevant policies will be saved from the adopted Winchester District Local Plan (2006). When the South Downs National Park Local Plan adopted it will supersede the Joint Core Strategy and the saved policies of the existing District Local Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 Winchester City Council began work on preparing the Core Strategy in 2006. Five formal public consultations were held between 2007 and 2010 when views were sought on the issues that the Core Strategy should address. The first consultation was a 'Live for the Future' consultation, followed by an Issues and Options document which outlined the challenges and potential policy solutions within the district. The third consultation was held on the 'Preferred Options', which set out the Council's preferred approaches to and locations for development. The preparation and development of the Proposed Submission document took place in 2010-11, which included the 'Blueprint' consultation and follow-up 'Plans for Places – After Blueprint' consultation. There was a final representation period on the pre-submission publication version of the Joint Core Strategy in January 2012, which the SDNPA Planning Committee and the SDNPA had both endorsed in December 2011.
- 2.2 The formulation of the Core Strategy took place largely prior to the SDNPA becoming the

local planning authority in April 2011. At the SDNPA's Planning Committee's meeting of 13 June 2011 the Committee endorsed 'light touch' joint working with Winchester City Council on the draft Winchester Joint Core Strategy as the proposed strategic planning policy framework for that part of the National Park within Winchester District.

- 2.3 On 18 June 2012 the Winchester Joint Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. Following submission of the Joint Core Strategy, the Secretary of State appointed Nigel Payne as the planning inspector to carry out an independent examination of the Winchester Joint Core Strategy.
- 2.4 Following the Examination in Public sessions held between 30 October and 8 November 2012 the City Council published Proposed Final Modifications, which were subject to a period of public consultation. In light of the Examination in Public and the Proposed Modifications the Inspector sent his interim conclusions and recommendations to WCC (4 February 2013) for 'fact-checking'. After a response from the City Council and NPA back to the Planning Inspectorate the final report was released on 11 February 2013 finding the Joint Core Strategy sound subject to certain modifications.

3. Joint Core Strategy Policies

- 3.1 Within the Winchester Joint Core Strategy the rural nature and high quality environment of the landscape and settlements of the area of the district within and providing the setting to the South Downs National Park (SDNP) is recognised.
- 3.2 There are no allocations for new development within the South Downs National Park part of the district nor are any of the settlements within the National Park given a housing target, either in the submitted plan or the main modifications.

4. Inspectors Report – Recommendations and suggested modifications

- 4.1 The Inspector's Report concludes that the Winchester District Local Plan Part I – Joint Core Strategy "provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the District over the next 20 years providing a number of modifications are made to the Plan. ... the Council has requested me to recommend modifications to make the plan sound and capable of adoption, which I have listed in the Appendix. These would satisfy the requirements of Section 20(5) of the 2004 Act and meet the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework. None of the modifications alters the main thrust of the Council's policies or proposals." (Non-Technical Summary, page 3)
- 4.2 The main modifications are:
 - Include a model policy containing a presumption in favour of sustainable development;
 - Increase the new housing total for the district over the plan period to 12,500 (Policy DSI/CPI), to reflect the capacity identified at North Whiteley (Policy SH3) and in the Market Towns and Rural Area (Policy MTRA 1/2) and achieve general conformity with the South East Plan (RS);
 - Clarify the new employment land requirements for the district as about 20 hectares for Winchester in particular (Policy CP8) and allocate Bushfield Camp (Policy WT3) for employment uses, not as an "opportunity site";
 - Clarify retail policy, including for Winchester (WT1) and that Denmead is a Local not a District Centre (3.84) and;
 - Revise policies (MTRA2, MTRA3, CP5 and CP12) and supporting text to meet the requirements of the Habitat Regulations.

Policy WT3 Bushfield Camp (Main Modification 20)

- 4.3 Bushfield Camp is a partly brownfield site of about 43ha clearly visible from parts of the SDNP to the east, notably the prominent local landmark, with public access, of St. Catherine's Hill. It lies close to the existing built up area of the built-up area of Winchester city and is largely comprised of a former military camp with the remnants of some structures, including large areas of hardstanding, still present in the south central area. The

formerly developed central section of around 20ha of the total site is considered suitable, in principle, for redevelopment by the Council.

- 4.4 The Inspector visited the site and viewed it from St Catherine's Hill and considered that much of the city is seen from the St Catherine's Hill viewpoint, including numerous modern buildings as well as the historic ones, such as the Cathedral. Moreover, the local landform and the backdrop of trees to the west, as well as those on and around the site itself, he believes would help to limit the visual impact of any new buildings here on the historic/landscape setting of this part of Winchester. Policy WT3 properly recognises the importance of ensuring that any new built development respects the local landscape sensitivity of the location close to, but outside, the SDNP and within a local gap, in terms of high quality design, layout and landscaping, as well as new building heights.
- 4.5 The Inspector concluded, taking into account the Council's proposed modifications to the text of the comprehensive list of relevant criteria to be met by any scheme, and the inclusion of the additional paragraph of supporting text at the end, subject only to changing "identified as an Opportunity" to "allocated as an Employment" (MM 20), policy WT3 is considered sound in all respects. Changes are also required to the text of paras 3.39 and 3.40 for consistency.

Policy MTRA3 (Market Towns and Rural Areas) (Main Modification 14)

- 4.6 The district's settlement hierarchy, as set out in the Joint Core Strategy, applies to the whole district, both within and outside the SDNP, without in any way altering the legal duties and responsibilities applicable in the SDNP. The inspector recognises that the fact that: "this plan was submitted jointly by the SDNPA confirms that there is no reason to alter this or any other policies to achieve any greater level of protection of the National Park's assets and qualities than would already be provided in the plan, as modified."
- 4.7 In all other respects the application of particular policies to individual settlements largely reflects their position under present policies in the 2006 Local Plan but also now has to take on board the guidance in the NPPF regarding rural areas. Based on all the factors taken into account by the Council, including population, service levels, public transport and links to larger centres, there is insufficient evidential justification for any changes to the lists of settlements or the overall hierarchy.
- 4.8 Nevertheless, in accordance with the 2012 Local Plan Regulations, it would be possible for the City Council to amend the lists as part of the Local Plan Part 2 process should a strong case for any such change emerge, or the NPA through the South Downs National Park Local Plan. For clarity in relation to settlement boundaries the Inspector has deleted "existing" from the first part of the policy and made a small change, as has been done elsewhere in the Plan, regarding the protection of designated areas (MM 14).

5. Process of Adoption

- 5.1 Whilst legislatively the Inspector's report is not binding upon the Local Planning Authorities, an authority can only adopt a document which has been found 'sound'. Therefore, in order to formerly adopt the Joint Core Strategy the recommended Main Modifications have been incorporated into the Joint Core Strategy document being considered today.
- 5.2 The document is before Members of the Planning Committee today for consideration and if the recommendation is agreed, the document will be considered for formal adoption by the National Park Authority at its next meeting on 19 March 2013. Being a Joint Core Strategy, both the SDNPA and WCC are required to resolve to adopt the document.
- 5.3 Winchester City Council's cabinet will have been asked (at their 13 March 2013 meeting) to consider a report on the recommendations and suggested Main Modifications in the Inspectors Report and resolved to recommend to the Council that they formerly adopt the Core Strategy (as amended). Full Council will consider this at their meeting on 20 March 2013 (a special meeting).
- 5.4 The formal adoption of the Joint Core Strategy can only take place after both authorities have agreed to formerly adopt the document. Should either authority not accept the main

modifications, or choose to reject the recommendation, then neither authority will be able to adopt the document.

6. Resources

6.1 There are no budgetary implications for the SDNPA in relation to this paper.

7. Risk management

7.1 Risk - without comprehensive, sound and up-to-date planning policy for the National Park, underpinned by a robust evidence base, the NPA risks losing:

- (i) opportunities to guide and facilitate appropriate new development and highlight the quality of development that is being sought for the National Park will be lost
- (ii) control of being able to determine what is inappropriate new development, through losing planning appeals, and
- (iii) community belief in our engagement process and our ability to plan will be eroded

Mitigation - the risks will be significantly reduced by the timely preparation of a sound Joint Core Strategy.

8. Crime and Disorder Implication

8.1 It is considered that the proposal does not raise any crime and disorder implications.

9. Human Rights Implications

9.1 There are not considered to be any implications arising from this report on human rights, equalities or health and safety grounds.

10. Equalities Act 2010

13.1 Due regard, where relevant, has been taken to the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equalities Act 2010.

11. External Consultees

11.1 Head of Strategic Planning and Principal Planning Officer, Winchester City Council

TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

Contact Officer: Tim Richings, Planning Policy Manager

Tel: 01730 811752

email: tim.richings@southdowns.gov.uk

Appendices None

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Head of Operations, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Legal Services, Development Management Manager, Minerals and Waste Lead, Planning Service Development Manager.

External Consultees Strategic Planning Manager and Principal Planning Officer, Winchester City Council

Background Documents Inspector's Report and Appendices:

<http://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan-part-1/planning-inspector-39-s-report/>

Winchester Joint Core Strategy: <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan-part-1/examination/track-change-versions/>