



DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

TOPIC – Winchester City Council’s Response to ODPM Consultation Paper ‘Planning for Housing Provision’.

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council’s Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the City Secretary and Solicitor, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance are consulted together with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Performance Improvement Committee.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

If you wish to make representation on this proposed Decision please contact the relevant Portfolio Holder and the following Committee Administrator by 5.00pm on Friday 16 September 2005

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Nigel Green 01962 848562 ngreen@winchester.gov.uk

Committee Administrator: Colin Veal 01962 848438 cveal@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

1. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on a radically new approach to improve the supply of housing through the planning system. The key elements of this approach are;
 - a. Assessments of need and demand, and the development of planning policies on the basis of a robust evidence base, which looks at housing markets and is developed working in partnership with stakeholders, and
 - b. A proactive approach, using positive planning to deliver appropriate housing land, and maintain a rolling 5-year supply of housing and identify land for a further 10 years. The emphasis is on the allocated land being both sustainable and deliverable, without an undue reliance on windfall sites.
2. It is intended that this consultation will inform the new PPS3 to be published in the autumn. Responses are invited by the 9th September 2005.

3. The Government's strategy is to improve access to housing and improve affordability, by increasing the supply of housing. The challenges seen by the Government which the consultation paper seeks to address are;
 - a. Worsening affordability, as a consequence of long term undersupply of housing. Demand for housing in the south-east has risen due to increased household formation, at a time when housing supply has fallen. This has seen house prices rise significantly, worsening affordability for many households.
 - b. Land supply constraints, with insufficient deliverable housing land coming through the planning system. The inadequacies in the supply of housing land are seen as a key constraint on the number of houses built.
 - c. The failure of the planning system to respond to the housing market. Currently regional or local planning authorities are not required to take account of the housing market; land supply is therefore unresponsive to changes in market conditions. Although the government recognises that it is important to distinguish between long-term and short-term trends.
4. The key differences between the current system and that put forward in the consultation paper are;
 - a. Housing distribution will still take place at a regional level, but in future it would be on the basis of sub-regional housing markets. The purpose of this is to ensure that decisions on the level of new housing required in an area will be based on the housing market for the wider sub-region rather than administrative boundaries. The housing targets will take into account information about the housing market, affordability and housing need, as well as wider social, economic and environmental considerations.
 - b. Instead of planning for a 10 year supply of land, in future LPAs would be expected to allocate a 5 year supply of developable land, with less reliance on windfall sites. This is aimed at addressing the current mismatch between housing allocations in local plans and a shortfall in delivery experienced in some areas.
 - c. The five year supply of land will be rolled forward, as land is developed. LPAs will be required to bring forward land from the 10 supply to ensure the supply of developable land is maintained.
5. Officers' recommended response to this consultation is appended to this report and will be forwarded to the ODPM by the 9th September to meet the consultation deadline, and any subsequent comments received as a result of this report will be forwarded to them as soon as the Portfolio Holder's decision is made.

PROPOSED DECISION

Recommendation.

That the attached response is forwarded to the ODPM as the considered views of the City Council.

REASON FOR THE PROPOSED DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The consultation period ends on the 9th September and whilst an officer response will be sent to meet this deadline, the Portfolio Holder's endorsement of the Response note is sought as the official response of the Council and will be sent to the ODPM once signed.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

n/a

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Councillor Beveridge – Portfolio Holder for Planning

ANNEX B – Planning for housing provision consultation – Questions on which we would like your views

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1. Consultees are invited to put forward their views on the proposed approach. Section 2 introduced some specific questions on which we are grateful for consultees views and experience:

Winchester District is a highly attractive place to live this has resulted in house prices that are considerably above the regional averages. The council is currently expecting to meet, and in all probability exceed its targets in respect of housing provision. The council in addition to having to plan to meet a baseline figure, which includes a Major Development Area of 2,000 dwellings to the West of Waterlooville, has had to allocate land for two strategic reserve sites of 2,000 and 1,000 dwellings respectively.

2. Consultees are invited to highlight good practice that would deliver the collaborative approach to planning for housing markets set out here, or to suggest particular structures, mechanisms and incentives that would support planning and decision making at the level of the housing market.

No comments

3. Consultees are invited to give their views on how a tailored approach to planning for housing could work or whether a single approach, but in the context of different levels of growth, is preferable.

No comments

4. Consultees are invited to give their views on how assessments of land availability covering sub-regional housing markets could best work and provide examples of existing practice that achieves this.

The City Council welcomes in principle the monitoring of performance across the sub-region rather than individual LPAs, with the proviso that efficient authorities should not be expected to effectively 'carry' underperforming authorities.

Further advice would be welcome on the mechanisms envisaged to ensure that LPAs within a sub-regional housing market undertake joint working to ensure an adequate and consistent supply of housing land. The suggestion in the consultation document that a joint DPD on housing land allocations is prepared by the affected LPAs, is not without its own difficulties, not least in that a number of councils are producing Site Allocation DPDs

that look at land allocations more holistically and are planning to provide for a wider range of complementary land uses, including employment land, retail and town centre uses. This is certainly the position of Winchester City council which with the encouragement of the Government Office is considering all major land use allocations in the relevant DPD.

The City Council would question therefore how an even supply of housing will in practice be delivered across the sub- region.

5. Consultees are asked to give views on the best means to manage windfall in different areas in order to deliver sustainable development.

The City Council would like to reiterate the importance of urban capacity and windfall sites to areas like Winchester. With the countryside within the district heavily protected, a large part of which is likely to be in the proposed South Downs National Park the council has in the past relied heavily on bringing forward previously developed windfall and urban capacity sites to meet its housing requirements. Historically the Council has met strategic housing targets notwithstanding its strong reliance on these sources of housing land. Therefore in considering the adequacy and reliance on these sources of housing provision in future DPDs, considerable weight should be given to them in those authorities that can demonstrate an up to date urban capacity study, and a consistent record of delivering urban capacity and windfall sites. Any new policy should certainly not promote the allocation of new (probably greenfield) sites rather than making best use of urban capacity and windfall on predominantly brownfield sites.

6. Consultees are invited to give their views on how far monitoring market information such as house prices could add value to ensure that the judgments local authorities make about rolling forward are soundly based.

We would welcome the analysis of market conditions as an important element in determining housing allocations. The City council would also welcome a dialogue with house builders and other key stakeholders to ensure that allocated sites in the district are viable and deliverable. But market information should only form a part of the site allocation process. Fluctuations in market demand should not be a major consideration in releasing future years supply of housing unless it is clear that it is causing an imbalance in the type of housing required to meet identified housing need. Where that became evident the City Council as Planning Authority would seek to act to bring appropriate developments forward. Provided that a Local Planning Authority has identified a 5-year supply of land through their Local Development Framework, bringing forward any further land should only take place after proper consideration of all the relevant issues through the LDF review process.

The City Council would also express the strong concern that in an attractive district such as Winchester, there will always be a tension between housing need and supply. It must surely be the case that some areas will be more attractive than others and this will be reflected in house prices. It will be necessary to ensure that any development in such areas is sustainable and viable and adds to the attractiveness of any particular community, rather than letting the scale and location of housing be led simply by market demand.. Mechanisms other than increasing the supply of housing through the planning system will be required if the government is serious about improving the affordability of housing in the Winchester district.