Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan, 2014 to 2029

Housing Site Selection Addendum

Final
October 2016

This document is the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan Housing Site Selection Addendum intended for submission under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (As Amended).

Disclaimer: every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is as accurate as possible but no responsibility is implied or taken for errors or omission.
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2 Introduction

2.1 This addendum is to be read in conjunction with the WNP Housing Site Selection Draft report, which was submitted as a supporting document to accompany the Pre-submission Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan under Regulation 14.

2.2 Since the Pre-submission WNP was submitted under Regulation 14 in December 2015 there have been a number of developments that affect the Plan. The most important of these are:

- On May 26th 2016, BDBC adopted the Local Plan (2011-2029) which changes the number of houses to be allocated by the Town Council and removes the BDBC allocation of Employment Land in Whitchurch.
- The Rural Exception Scheme proposed by Hyde Housing Association and included in the Regulation 14 WNP has been postponed indefinitely.
- There has been a number of planning applications and decisions for housing and employment.
- There have been comments on our pre-submission WNP submitted in December that require changes.

2.3 These developments have resulted in a shortfall of approximately 60 houses allocated in the Regulation 14 WNP. This document details the changes, which have occurred, and the actions taken by the NPSC to identify and select sites to address this shortfall. The results of these processes have been reflected in the Regulation 15 WNP, which this addendum accompanies.
3 Basis for the allocation of land for housing development in the Regulation 14 WNP

3.1 The Regulation 14 WNP allocated land for housing development was based upon the following basis:

- Whitchurch was required to allocate sites for a minimum of 350 homes under Emerging Local Plan policy SS5.
- A site for 150 houses at Bloswood Lane is allocated in the Emerging Local Plan policy SS3.6
- Appeal upheld for 34 homes on the Allotments
- Town Council supported Rural Exception Site for 25 homes at the Knowlings.
- This left a minimum of 141 houses to be allocated by the Neighbourhood Plan on sites of 10 or more dwellings

3.2 To meet this requirement the Regulation 14 WNP additionally allocated the following:

- East of Winchester Road (100 homes)
- Dances Lane (15 homes)
- Serendipity Sam's (16 homes)
- Car centre (10 homes)

3.3 These allocations enabled the Regulation 14 WNP to fully meet the requirement of the pre-submission Draft Local Plan at the time of Regulation 14 submission.
4 Specific post Regulation 14 developments which this addendum addresses

4.1 On May 26th 2016, BDBC adopted the Local Plan. The BDBC Local Plan to 2029 as adopted included changes which amongst others:

- Requires the Town Council to allocate sites for “at least” rather than approximately 200 homes (in practice 220 with contingency) in addition to the 150 homes allocated by BDBC at Bloswood Lane.
- Removes the conditional allocation of the R E Thompson and Serendipity Sam’s site for housing development.

4.2 In addition to the above the following developments occurred post Regulation 14 submission of the WNP:

- The Rural Exception Site for 25 homes at The Knowlings proposed by the Hyde Housing Association has been postponed indefinitely.
- An outline planning application was approved for 100 homes East of Winchester Road.
- Concerns were raised that the Car Centre may not be able to accommodate 10 homes as part of the site lies within the floodplain.
- Concerns were raised that the allocation of Serendipity Sam’s adjacent to R E Thompson’s site which the WNP wishes to retain for employment use was not in compliance with the Regulation 14 WNP policies which do not support the development of homes in close proximity to sites which are used for employment use. The NPSC therefore reviewed the suitability of the Serendipity Sam’s site for Housing.

4.3 These factors leaves the Regulation 14 pre-submission WNP as submitted approximately 60 short of its requirement under Policy SS5 of the Local Plan as shown in table 1 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Neighbourhood Plan</th>
<th>Changes as a result of BDBC Local Plan and other considerations</th>
<th>Proposed Neighbourhood Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Exception Site</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning approval for 34 Homes at the Allotments site East of Caesar’s Way</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning approval for 100 homes East of Winchester Road</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Neighbourhood Plan allocation at Serendipity Sam’s</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Neighbourhood Plan allocation at Dances Lane</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Neighbourhood Plan reserve site allocation at Whitchurch Car Centre</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Neighbourhood Plan allocation at North West Whitchurch</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>159</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan allocation for Whitchurch</td>
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<td>“Minimum of 200”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess (Shortfall)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess (Shortfall) (%)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(38%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Housing allocations
5 Actions taken by the NPSC to address the shortfall

5.1 The shortfall could not be addressed by the allocation of smaller sites. The NPSC therefore carefully assessed its site selection information contained in the Housing Site Selection Report, reviewed all of the available sites as described below.

5.2 Based on the public consultation, the following sites were noted as having the potential to accommodate the additional 50 dwellings. Each site was reassessed on the basis of the original assessment criteria (only key points noted below) and ability to deliver in a local referendum.

5.3 The original assessment criteria incorporate measures designed to assess the alternatives in line with the Strategic Environment Assessment from AECOM. As noted in that report, the land, soil and water resource impact is negative for all the medium sized sites. All negative impacts from the SEA were identified in the assessment.

6 Bloswood Lane Extension

6.1 Bloswood Lane Extension site is included by BDB as part of the Bloswood Lane allocation in the Adopted Local Plan.

6.2 Key Disadvantages:
   - Traffic access from Bloswood Lane (impact on Town Centre)
   - Difficulties in designing suitable noise suppression measures
   - Proposal not supported by Landowner.

7 East of Winchester Road

7.1 Note: Original developer proposal was for 200 units – reduced to 100 in discussion with NPSC (outline planning application now approved).

7.2 Key Disadvantages:
   - Additional traffic onto Micheldever Road/London Road Jct.
   - Fluid site boundary – risk of further development
   - Big site, all housing in one place not favoured as a solution at consultation
   - Loss of agricultural land
   - Landscape impact on the rising ground
   - No additional on-site community benefits sought
   - NPSC would need to allocate site for 150 units (part already approved) and re-consult on basis of 150 dwellings.
7.3 Key Advantages:

- None Identified

8 East of Bere Hill

8.1 Key Disadvantages:

- Prominent landscape location near the AONB
- No on-site community benefits suggested by developer

8.2 Key Advantages:

- Proximity to Station
- Access North of Town centre
- Small-Medium Site

9 East of The Knowlings

9.1 Key Disadvantages:

- Additional traffic onto Micheldever Road/London Road Jct.

9.2 Noted that the site had been identified as an RES (HARAH) site for future development by BDBC and WTC, but that this scheme is now not being progressed.

9.3 Key Advantages:

- Potential for on-site community benefits

10 North West Whitchurch

10.1 Key Disadvantages:

- Access via Evingar Road raised as a concern (but not considered grounds for refusal of planning application by BDB Highways)
- Potential for future use of railway tunnel access to be lost
- Potential impact on biodiversity habitat area of old railway embankment.

10.2 Key Advantages:

- Combined with allotment approval site gives 84 residential units and an opportunity to provide an expansion of the Ardglen employment area.
- Screened from view by valley and mature trees
- Proximity to railway station
- Access north of town centre
- High score on community survey
- Medium site
11 Site Shortlist

11.1 The NPSC then selected two unallocated sites with the potential to meet this shortfall:

- **East of Bere Hill** (Note: Alternative developer proposals were put forward as part of the community consultation, NPSC requested the developer to prepare a scheme for 50 units which did not require the re-location of the scout hut and which was design more carefully to respect the prominent position (landscape) on the edge of the AONB.)
  - Access via Ardglen to be investigated as alternative to Evingar Road.
  - 50 units of Housing
  - Option for Future use of tunnel link north of Railway to be retained
  - Development to better reflect site topography and issues of adjacency to B2 uses

- **North West Whitchurch** (NPSC requested the developer to put forward a scheme which provided circa 30k ft² of B1/B2 employment use – contiguous (as an expansion to Ardglen.)
  - Access via Ardglen to be investigated as alternative to Evingar Road.
  - 50 units of Housing
  - Option for Future use of tunnel link north of Railway to be retained
  - Development to better reflect site topography and issues of adjacency to B2 uses

11.2 The NPSC met with the site owners and asked them to make proposals for the number of homes which would meet the shortfall. Both landowners responded to the request and presented schematic layouts for developments which met the required criteria.

- North West Whitchurch
- East of Bere Hill

11.3 The owners of the East of Bere Hill site presented proposals which with approximately 50 homes in the central part of the site.

11.4 The owners of the North West Whitchurch site agreed to modify the proposals for their mixed-use application which was refused planning permission in the following ways:

- The number of homes on the site would be up to 60 instead of up to 70
- Station Car Park is to be increased to 70 places and that St Cross will work with adjoining landowners to ensure that access from the car park is provided directly to the north platform of the railway station
- That 2,800 m² (3,300 m² with mezzanine) of B1 and B2 employment development would be provided
- The site is laid out to ensure that housing is not located directly adjacent to proposed or existing B2 Industry (B1 or open space to act as buffer)
- That a Road Traffic Order would be sought to prevent HGV traffic turning right onto Evingar Road
- Future use of railway tunnel access will not be lost
- Planting of tree buffer zone to adjacent A34 road and railway embankments
- The proposed public open space, orchard and allotments, would be transferred to public ownership and management organisation with maintenance funded
11.5 The selection criteria including the “SHLAA” and Vision criteria were reviewed to determine if the scores were affected by the reduced number of homes or other changes in the proposals presented by the landowners. NO changes made to the criteria recorded.

11.6 Both sites scored similarly on the Planning, Vision and Community preference criteria and were capable of accommodating the required number of homes.
12 Final Selection

12.1 Following the careful assessment of the proposals the NPSC selected the North West Whitchurch site as the best site to provide up to 60 homes. In making this selection the NPSC also were also cognisant of the following:

- The ability of the site to provide land for employment development of appropriate size and type to the need identified in the WNP as part of a mixed-use development (the only site of this type available)
- Significant community benefits which were offered by the landowner:
  - a new free car park for the railway station with footpath links to the north and southbound platforms
  - a large area of open space on the higher land near the A34
  - a community orchard
  - car parking for the allotments

12.2 The owner of the site has withdrawn an appeal against the refusal which was planned to be heard by the inspector in August 2016 and plans to re-submit a proposal which accommodates the modifications agreed with the NPSC including a reduced number of homes. These proposals address a number of the concerns expressed in the Housing Site Selection Report including:

- Nuisance caused by the proximity of homes and B2 Industry

12.3 The delivery of the sewage infrastructure remains a concern however this would be equally if not more problematic for the East of Bere Hill Site considered as an alternative.

Traffic and Access

12.4 Traffic impact on the Town Centre and Winchester Road black spots was assessed as average for this size of development. Access arrangements are a concern including the following:

- Using Caesars Way as a through road is likely to be unpopular with the residents of the Caesars Way estate. The recent planning application restricted access from Caesars Way to emergency vehicles and pedestrians.
- access via the tunnel under the railway is preferred by the NPSC but considered to be unnecessary and undeliverable by the site owner
- access via Evingar Road has not been given as a reason for refusal of the current planning application by the Highways authority
- HGVs travelling through the Town Centre are of primary concern although traffic order measures could prevent HGV traffic existing the site from travelling south on Evingar Road
12.5 These matters were discussed with the site owners during the preparation of their revised application.

**Proximity of Homes and B2 Industry**

12.6 The new proposal for the N W Whitchurch site will help to protect the homes developed on the site from noise and vibration from existing and planned industry by the following means:

- Reduced number of homes on the site allowing for increased buffer zones
- Allowing for revised layout of the site which will include the 34 homes planned for the allotments site to reduce the conflict between housing and industry
- The inclusion of B1 industry to act as a buffer between homes and B2 industry

12.7 Policies to address these issues have been included in the Regulation 15 WNP.
13 Revised Housing Allocations

13.1 As a result of the above assessments the Regulation 14 WNP has been amended for the purposes of the Regulation 15 submission to include the following.

- The allocation of the N W Whitchurch site for 94 homes (60 in addition to the 34 already granted for the allotments site)
- The removal of the allocation for the development of Serendipity Sam’s site for 16 homes.
- The change of allocation of the Car Centre as a reserve site for 10 homes if shortfall to the number of homes were to occur during the Plan period.
- The sites allocated for housing in the Regulation 15 WNP are shown in Plan 1 shown below. The additional or revised policies contained within the Regulation 15 WNP include the following:

Policy HA1 – Allocation of Dances Lane for approximately 15 dwellings
Policy HA2 - Allocation of land West of Evingar Road (North West Whitchurch) for up to 94 homes and 4000m² of business development

Policy HA3 – Allocation of the Car Centre as a reserve site for approximately 10 dwellings