

The Welborne Plan – Public Examination

Statement of Winchester City Council (WP041)

Issue 6

Education, Community and Health Facilities (WEL14 – WEL16)

Question 6.5 - Although the Council has identified two potential sites for a secondary school, the preferred location for the school is to the south of Knowle:

- **Is this the most appropriate location for a secondary school, particularly in terms of sustainability (i.e. is it justified?)**
- **Can this site be satisfactorily delivered (i.e. is it effective?). The secondary school playing fields would be provided within the boundary of Winchester City Council. Would this accord with the policies in the City Council's Development Plan? Is there evidence that the playing fields could be satisfactorily implemented?**

If the Council's current proposal is sound then what is the justification for identifying an alternative site?

6.5.1 The City Council welcomed the Suggested Change to the Submission Plan insofar as it went in identifying an alternative site for the secondary school. However, it did not feel able to withdraw its objection to the Submitted Plan on this matter given the identification of the land west of Welborne as the Plan's 'preferred location' for the school. Fareham Borough Council has subsequently published its 'Suggested Change to Submitted Version – Additional Alternative Location for Secondary School: Summary of Representations and Council's Response'. This document proposes one further change to the legend of the Strategic Framework Diagram. Again, this is welcomed insofar as it goes but does not overcome the City Council's objection to the retention of references to the preferred location of the secondary school being to the west of Welborne.

6.5.2 In terms of the location of the school, it is assumed that the first part of question 6.5 is referring to the Plan's preferred location of the school (to the west of the site, not the south). The City Council acknowledges that secondary schools are sometimes located near the edge of a settlement and this this can be appropriate given the amount of land needed to provide associated playing fields, etc. The City Council's objection to the preferred site is not so much in terms of its sustainability as a school site, but its impact on the 'Knowle triangle' and whether it is compatible with the City Council's Local Plan Part 1 policies. There is also the issue of whether this site is deliverable, given the policy issues and the fact that it is outside the control of the site promoters. These matters relate to the 2nd part of question 6.5 and are addressed below.

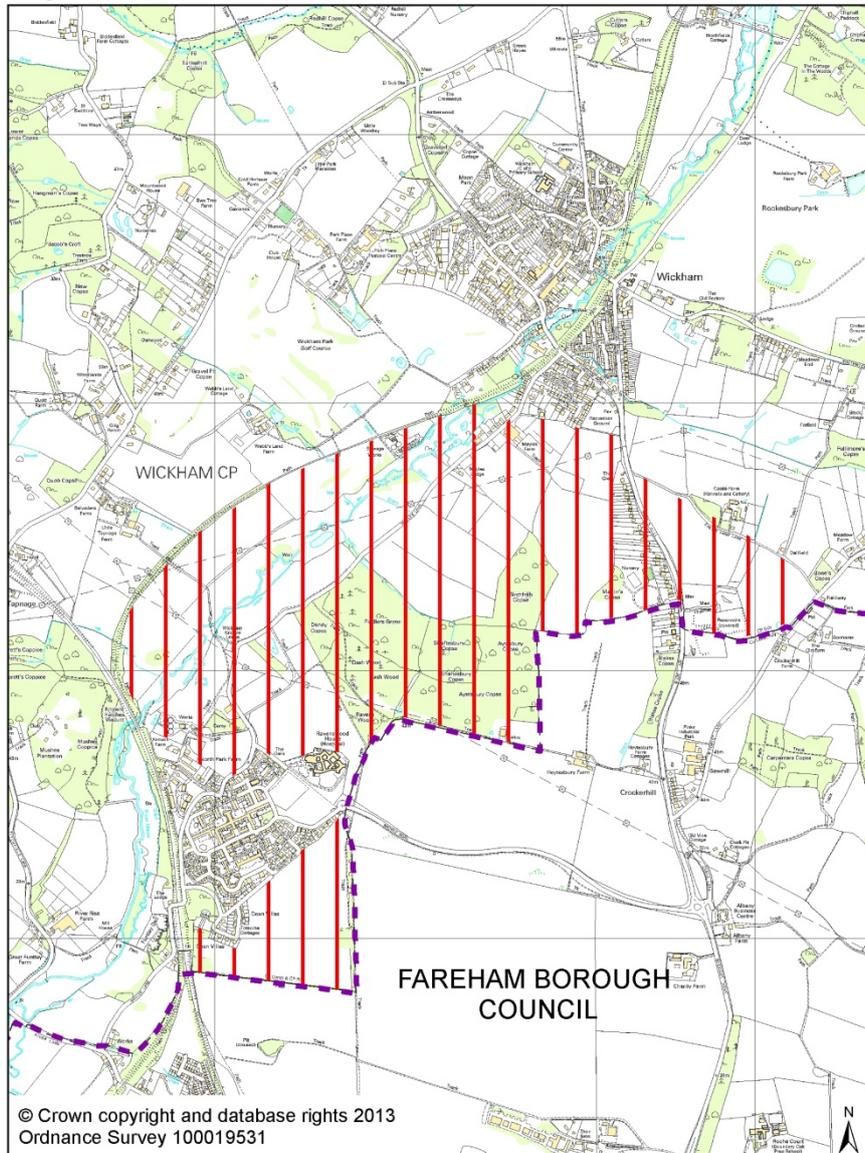
6.5.3 The Plan's preferred location for the secondary school is at the western edge of Welborne, with the majority of its playing fields within the 'Knowle triangle'. The Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 is part of the statutory development plan and applies the following policies to the land:

Policy SH4 - North Fareham SDA

The City Council will cooperate with Fareham Borough Council to help develop a Strategic Development Area of between 6,500 - 7,500 dwellings together with supporting uses, centred immediately to the north of Fareham.

Land within Winchester District (as shown on the plan below) will form part of the open areas, required by the South East Plan, to ensure separation between the SDA and the existing settlements of Knowle and Wickham. The open and undeveloped rural character of this land will be retained through the application of Policy CP18 - Gaps.

Map 8. SH4: North Fareham SDA



Key

- | | Settlement Gap
- - - District Boundary

0 250 500 Metres
1:20,000

Policy CP18 - Settlement Gaps

The Local Planning Authority will retain the generally open and undeveloped nature of the following defined settlement gaps:

Bishop's Waltham – Swanmore – Waltham Chase – Shedfield – Shirrell Heath
Denmead – Waterlooville
Kings Worthy - Abbots Worthy
Otterbourne – Southdown
Winchester – Compton Street
Winchester – Kings Worthy/Headbourne Worthy
Winchester – Littleton
Whiteley – Fareham/Fareham Western Wards (the 'Meon Gap')

Within these areas only development that does not physically or visually diminish the gap will be allowed.

To protect the individual character and identity of those settlements adjoining the proposed SDA at North Fareham, an area of open land is identified as a Gap to be maintained between the SDA and Knowle and Wickham (see Policy SH4). Development which would threaten the open and undeveloped character of this area will be resisted and the land should be managed to secure the long-term retention of its rural character.

6.5.4 These policies require that development which would threaten the open and undeveloped character of this area is resisted and that its open and undeveloped rural character is retained. They expect the land to be managed to secure the long-term retention of its rural character. The school buildings would be within the Welborne development, but the City Council's concern is that the development of playing fields within the gap would lead to its urbanisation. The fencing, goal posts, lighting, hard surfaced areas, and possible functional buildings and structures that would be likely to accompany secondary school playing fields would not be likely to retain its 'open and undeveloped rural character'.

6.5.5 The City Council acknowledges that open grassed playing fields could potentially meet the requirements of policies SH4 and CP18 and officers had previously indicated that an element of playing field provision may be compatible with these policies. However, with all of the secondary school playing fields now proposed in the Knowle triangle, the City Council believes that the scale and nature of provision would not be compatible with the 'gap' designation of the area. Modern secondary schools often have artificial pitches so as to maximise use, both in terms of durability and the times of use. Longer periods of use would require artificial lighting, and the investment in the facility along with pupil safety issues, would require substantial security fencing of the playing fields.

6.5.6 The 'Knowle triangle' is separated from the area proposed for the secondary school buildings by a substantial tree belt, which the LDA Landscape Study

identifies as 'important vegetation to be incorporated within landscape structure' (document EV18, Figure 3.1). Given the need for operational links between the secondary school buildings and playing fields, and for security and inter-visibility within the overall school site, it is expected that this important belt would be put under pressure by developing the school buildings on one side and playing fields on the other.

6.5.7 It may be thought that matters relating to the school and playing fields would be subject to control by the City Council, through the planning application process, but this is not the case. The school would be operational development for which Hampshire County Council could grant consent, with the City Council being only a consultee.

6.5.8 Accordingly, the City Council considers that the whole of the secondary school should be located within the boundary of Welborne, including its playing fields. While this could be in a location towards the west of the development, and it is not for the City Council to dictate the layout of uses within Welborne, the alternative location identified in the Suggested Change appears to be a highly sustainable location which would be well placed to serve the whole of Welborne and would be accessible for pupils from outside the area that may attend the school. Given the deliverability issues around the western site, the City Council considers that the Plan should refer only to the site north of the District Centre.

6.5.9 As the final part of question 6.5 implies, the identification of an alternative site for the secondary school indicates that there is, at best, uncertainty over the soundness of the preferred location for the school to the west of Welborne. While the Borough Council may wish to 'hedge its bets' by including an alternative location for the school, the preferred location is either sound or it isn't. The change sought by the City Council would retain the entirely legitimate requirement for the provision of a secondary school, but remove the uncertainty and lack of clarity that currently surrounds WEL16.

Change sought - Delete new, additional paragraph in WEL16 (retaining other changes to WEL16)

- Delete secondary school/playing field notation to the west of Welborne from the Strategic Framework Diagram and Policies Map.