

The Welborne Plan

Statement on Issues and Questions

Issue 4: Economy and Self-Containment (WEL9)

September 2014

CD-11

4.1 *Bearing in mind the objective of self-containment, is the relationship between employment and housing provision appropriate in terms of timing?*

4.1.1 A fundamental objective for the development of Welborne is to ‘encourage self-containment with a significant proportion of its inhabitants life needs being accessible within the main centres and smaller neighbourhood centres’. In this respect self-containment is defined as being able to easily walk to the shops, schools etc. While self-containment is not restricted to economic self-containment it also means creating a range of accessible new jobs which contribute towards meeting the employment needs of this diverse new community (Vision for Welborne paragraph 2.5).

4.1.2 It is recognised that developing the residential phases of Welborne, and associated community infrastructure is likely to commence in advance of the main phases of developing the employment floorspace. In addition, in the earliest phases, employment within Welborne will be limited to opportunities in the existing employment sites both on and immediately adjoining the site (including the significant employment offer at North Fareham, and the smaller employment area at Albany Farm), and in the retail and educational sectors. There will also be the opportunity for the residents to work from or at home.

4.1.3 In terms of the number of jobs likely to be created at Welborne, (around 5,735), approximately 3,335 (58%) will be in office, manufacturing and distribution jobs. So while employment in B1, B2 and B8 uses will be an important factor, employment at Welborne is not entirely dependent on these jobs.

4.1.4 Junction 10 is expected to be completed around 2019, which is earlier than anticipated in the Welborne Employment Strategy and reflects the funding commitments from Hampshire County Council and the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership to help the accelerated delivery of the junction improvements. Welborne will then provide an attractive employment location with easy access to the strategic highways network, in particular the docks at Portsmouth, and Southampton Airport, so bringing the main areas of employment land forward, should be a financially viable proposition. The Council has no effective means of controlling the rate at which the employment floorspace comes forward. This will largely be determined by market conditions, which operate on an entirely different basis to the housing market. For example while the market locally for employment floorspace has been ‘sluggish’ for a number of years and is only just picking up, the local market for housing has been improving for a much longer period. Maintaining the rate of housing development to the same rate as the employment development is therefore challenging. However, given its attractive location it could well be that in the medium to longer term the build rate of employment development keeps pace with or even over-takes the build rate of the residential development especially in the light of the completion of the junction 10 improvements and Welborne becoming an established location for employment provision.

- 4.1.5 It should also be noted that the Council has no means of directing where the new residents of Welborne chose to work. The policy is to ensure that the widest possible range of jobs is available to the new community, to help avoid the need for out-commuting. However it is also recognised that a significant proportion of the new workforce will commute out regardless of the jobs on offer. It is therefore an important part of the transport strategy to ensure that sustainable means of transport are available from the outset to minimise the use of the car for daily trips to work (see paragraph 7.31 of LP3).
- 4.1.6 Creating a flexible labour market has been an integral part of successive governments' economic policy. It is estimated that on average in the UK workers change jobs every 5 years. This has significantly weakened the traditional link between jobs and home. The employment strategy for Welborne is therefore a pragmatic response which attempts to ensure that there are sufficient job opportunities provided as the new housing is developed, taking into account infrastructure investment requirements and development viability. Although it is recognised that there is likely to be a potential shortfall in employment opportunities in the early years, given the demand and need for new homes in the area it would not be expedient to hold back housing delivery to try and align it with the delivery of employment floorspace.
- 4.2 *Is the scale of employment provision justified? What is the Council's fallback position should demand for employment land not materialise?***
- 4.2.1 One of the overarching justifications for the scale of provision is the desire to ensure as far as is practical a broad balance between the jobs on offer and the potential workforce in the new community, to help maximise the opportunities for self-containment. However this is not the sole reason for allocating the proposed level of employment land at Welborne.
- 4.2.2 The principle of a significant employment land allocation at Welborne was established in the original South Hampshire Strategy¹ and the South East Plan² which originally set a requirement for around 120,000 sq. m of employment floorspace. Welborne is identified as a key site for housing and employment in the Solent LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2014-20 (EV56). This document identified the site as delivering around 112,000 sq. m of employment floorspace (this figure included the retail floorspace).
- 4.2.3 The Welborne Plan takes a pragmatic approach to securing economic growth and does not specify the amount of floorspace required but rather it allocates 20 hectares of land for employment uses (in policy WEL3) based on the up-to-date evidence, provided in the Welborne Employment Strategy

¹ [South Hampshire Strategy \(December 2005\)](#)

² [The South East Plan](#)

(EV46). This is likely to bring forward around 97,250 sq. m (net internal) of employment floorspace. But importantly, because the policy is flexible about the mix of employment uses, the final amount of floorspace is likely to vary. It should also be noted that around 13,860 sq. m of existing employment floorspace on the site will be lost so the net increase will be around 83,390 sq. m. The Welborne Employment Strategy (EV46) identifies significant increase in demand for B2/ B8 floorspace, and a reduction at least in the short term in the demand for office floorspace.

- 4.2.4 Due to the existing and future noise levels from the motorway it would be difficult to bring forward non-employment uses on the bulk of the land required for employment in the Welborne Plan (EV07).
- 4.2.5 The policy itself indicates that there will be approximately 20 hectares of employment land and the Framework Plan only indicates the broad suitable locations for employment provision based on current evidence. The precise locations and extent of the employment land will be determined through the Structuring Plan and comprehensive masterplanning process. This gives a degree of flexibility in establishing the exact amount of employment land, and gives the opportunity to consider other uses especially where, suitable noise mitigation can be achieved.
- 4.2.6 The policy WEL 9 has a degree of flexibility built into it, in that the second paragraph refers to B use classes, and appropriate non-B employment generating uses, being potentially suitable on this land. These appropriate non-B employment generating uses might include residential care, educational/training facilities, commercial leisure, and hotel uses, being considered as appropriate. The emphasis being on creating a range of jobs rather than employment in a particular sector.
- 4.2.7 The recommendations in the Welborne Employment Strategy (EV46) indicates that a certain minimum size of development is likely to be required to meet the differing needs of employers requiring different types and sizes of units, including sufficient land to accommodate the future growth of businesses. Evidence from other successful employment locations suggests that there would need to be a critical mass of employment land to create a successful employment zone. Occupiers are often drawn to well-established business zones, so it makes sense to capitalise upon this desire by businesses to cluster together. In addition a certain critical mass of employment floorspace development is required to justify the infrastructure investment associated with opening up the employment zone (e.g. provision of utilities); and the larger the site the more scope for such fixed development costs to be shared across a larger number of developments. This contributes to development viability. The Employment Study (EV46) concluded that Welborne will be an important asset in promoting development in South Hampshire in the medium to long term, by providing land and accommodation for a wide range of different types of business requiring different forms of space in a strategic location.
- 4.2.8 It should be noted that both PUSH and the Solent Local Enterprise

Partnership (SLEP) support this level of employment floorspace and the approach set out in the Plan for its provision. This was confirmed in the PUSH response to the Welborne Plan (SD06 - Representation WP633) and is consistent with the Solent LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2014- 20.

4.3 *Are the locations of the proposed employment development appropriately justified?*

4.3.1 The bulk of the employment land is to be allocated adjoining the motorway. This is in part because the high levels of noise make this area unsuitable for other uses including residential and school uses. This is also the most accessible location for employment, without bringing additional traffic including heavy goods vehicles into the adjoining residential neighbourhoods. The employment land is located close to the green corridor adjoining the motorway, and a well-designed and landscaped development adjoining the green-space will to a large extent help screen Welborne from the motorway both in terms of visual impact and noise.

4.3.2 Given that land for other less noise sensitive uses is tight, it would not be appropriate to identify areas for employment uses on other parts of Welborne that could be used for residential use or other noise sensitive uses (e.g. schools, care homes etc.). However, some limited employment in the new local centres, and home working is to be encouraged. The Welborne Employment Strategy (EV46) estimates that by 2024 around 15% of the new community who are in work will either work from or at home.

4.3.3 The Plan envisages development of a Business Incubation Centre potentially within one of the new centres or indeed within the employment areas. Policy WEL10 also encourages the development of smaller premises aimed at start-up and other small businesses, which might be suitably located throughout Welborne.

4.3.4 The employment land adjoining the motorway would be in the most attractive location for potential investors and will have good access and a visible presence from the motorway.

4.3.5 Future employees would have good pedestrian access to the new district centre, which would improve footfall and the viability of this centre. Access to the new district centre would also be attractive to potential employers, as this would aid recruitment, if staff are able to access a range of facilities within walking distance.

4.4 *Is the type and range of proposed employment uses appropriately justified?*

4.4.1 As stated above the aim of the Welborne Plan is to provide a range and type of employment uses. The major part of which (58%) will be in B type uses. The Plan recognises that currently the market for employment

floorspace is highly un-predictable. The Welborne Employment Strategy (in section 3) highlighted an increase in demand in South Hampshire for B2/ B8 floorspace, and that the forecasts for the demand in new B1 office floorspace have been reduced from earlier forecasts. This is due to lower predictions for the number of jobs likely to be created in the business services sector, and greater efficiencies in how office floorspace is used. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to be too prescriptive in respect of specific quantum of floorspace for specific uses. Policy, in particular WEL9 reflects and accommodates this position. This is also borne out by the findings and recommendations of the Welborne Employment Strategy (EV46), that *'given the quantum of land and the lengthy anticipated timescale for development at Welborne there will need to be flexibility in how the land is used'* (paragraph 11).

- 4.4.2 The approximate number of jobs in non-B uses, is based on the Welborne Employment Strategy (EV46) which estimates that the number of people working at or from home to be around 1,150 jobs or 15% of the workforce. A further 1,250 jobs are expected to be created in the new shops, schools and health facilities. Again the Welborne Employment Strategy (EV46) has estimated the likely number of jobs created against the likely levels of floorspace provided in retail/schools etc. based on current worker/ floorspace ratios in these types of uses. By focusing on job creation rather than the delivery of a certain type of employment floorspace, there is an inherent flexibility in the Welborne Plan that will help to maximise employment opportunities.
- 4.4.3 The Welborne Employment Strategy (EV46) provides evidence that at the present time there is demand for B8 (storage and distribution) floorspace along the M27 corridor. There is also some additional demand for B1c (light industrial) and B1b (research and development) uses. This in part reflects the loss of such floorspace between 2000 and 2010. By contrast there is currently an over-supply of B1a floorspace with significant stocks of vacant premises. The policy therefore introduces sufficient flexibility as to the types of employment uses likely to come forward in both the short to long term, and in this way appropriately accommodates a range of suitable future employment scenarios. This degree of flexibility is also important as the distinction between office use and advanced manufacturing and other modern employment uses has become blurred, and it is often difficult to be precise as to exactly what use-class a specific employment use falls into.
- 4.4.4 The range of jobs is also justified on the basis that Welborne will provide a range of house types and tenures including a percentage of affordable housing. This will attract residents with a wide range of skills and incomes. It is therefore important that a wide range of jobs is provided, if the aim of encouraging a degree of self-containment is to be achieved.

4.5 *Is the Council’s approach sufficiently aspirational - will it result in a high level of self-containment? Is there more the Council could do to facilitate home working and sustainable travel?*

4.5.1 Given the parameters of plan making, the role of the Plan is to ensure ‘that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation (paragraph 7 NPPF). It is important to strike a balance between being aspirational and ensuring that the vision for Welborne has a reasonable prospect of being delivered. By providing a wide range of employment opportunities close to new housing, it will ensure that there is a realistic potential for Welborne to minimise journey lengths (paragraph 37 NPPF), thus achieve a reasonable level of self-containment within the site.

4.5.2 In considering home working it is important to distinguish between working at home and working from home. Self-employment has accounted for a third of the rise in employment over the past 3 years, with significant growth among those aged 50+. Many of these self-employed people will work at or from home – working flexible hours. Thus self-employment has increased significantly since the 2011 Census, and this is likely to have led to an increase in working from home since the 2001 Census, and as such, home working can be expected to increase over the next decade. This group of self-employed people includes many professionals, but also many tradesmen who are based at home. Ironically it is this sector of the economy that is difficult to plan for in terms of sustainable transport options, as their travel to work patterns will vary, often on a day-to-day basis.

4.5.3 The Plan recognises the needs of both those who will substantially spend most of their time working at home, and those who will be working from home. In particular, policy WEL 9 encourages the connection of Welborne to high-speed fibre optic broadband, especially in the new centres and employment areas. It also encourages flexible office and meeting spaces, much of which will be located in the new centres, all of which will help encourage and facilitate working from home.

4.6 *Is the Council’s approach to office provision (for example safeguarding 3ha of land for later in the plan period) clear and justified? In terms of the sustainability of Welborne why is office development not proposed for earlier in the plan period?*

4.6.1 It is not the Council’s intention that the provision of office development is delayed. The rationale for the safeguarding of land is to ensure that, in the event that office proposals do not come forward in the first early years of development, there is sufficient opportunity for office development to come forward as part of the overall employment offer at Welborne. The Council considers that the current wording of Policy WEL 9 is appropriate, but some additional clarification in the supporting text may provide clarity. Therefore minor modifications are proposed to address this as follows:

4.6.2 Suggest additional final sentence to be added to para. 5.17:

“However, if office proposals come forward on any of the land allocated for employment uses earlier than anticipated, they will be supported from the outset, provided that the proposals are otherwise in accordance with the Plan.”

4.7 Does the Council have a fall-back position should the upgrade of junction 10 of the M27 be delayed (on which the provision of much of the employment floor space relies)? Will the Council’s phasing strategy weaken the achievement of self-containment?

4.7.1 Traffic capacity on the M27 mainline in the vicinity of Welborne is already constrained particularly during peak periods when network delays cause unreliable journey time and frustrate economic growth in the area. Improved accessibility via an all moves Junction 10 is essential to encourage the planned new employment investment at Welborne and to provide a ‘front door’ to the new site from the strategic highway network.

4.7.2 The Council’s initial infrastructure evidence identified 2021/2022 as the timeframe at which the improvements to Junction 10 were required to mitigate the traffic generated by the Welborne development. Since then the Highway Authority has delivered a work programme which shows how the improvements can be delivered around 2018/19. The delivery timescale will be phased over a number of years with initial works commencing as early as 2016/17 with completion around 2018/19. These timescales have been identified as realistic and necessary to ensure that appropriate access is provided commensurate with not only traffic demand but also to provide an attractive access solution for this substantial strategic site in order to attract investment in at the earliest opportunity.

4.7.3 The accelerated timetable for delivery of J10 of the M27 set out above, along with the increased certainty of the likely design of Junction 10 to (as set out in the Preferred Option Note EV43) and support from Solent LEP gives greater confidence that the improvements to Junction 10 will be delivered at an early stage in the development of Welborne.

4.7.4 It is expected that the upgrade of Junction 10 will be brought forward in a series of phased improvements. Therefore delays in delivery of any individual component should not prevent other parts of the works from proceeding. Should the upgrade of Junction 10 be significantly delayed, then this will affect the attractiveness of the site as an employment site, but would also constrain the delivery of both employment and housing development.

4.7.5 The delivery of Junction 10 is needed to deliver Welborne as a whole, therefore both employment and residential development will only proceed with a managed programme for the delivery of the improvements.

- 4.7.6 Regarding Phasing, the Council's Phasing Strategy as set out in the *Welborne Concept Masterplan Phasing Plan* (EV38) describes one way on which the site may be delivered, in line with the Council's Concept Masterplan. This Phasing Plan will act as a guide for the principal landowners in producing their plan and strategy for implementation in support of their development proposals. Once those have been agreed with the Council they will supersede the description set out in that document. However, the housing and employment land trajectories set out in Tables 10.1 and 10.2 of the Welborne Plan (SD01) demonstrate how housing and employment land can be delivered together, providing opportunities for self-containment.