

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL – UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD

PARISH UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2023

Local Plan Reviews

Both the Winchester and South Downs Local Plans are currently under review, but at different stages of the review process. Winchester City Council members have recently been briefed on the outcome of the public consultation over the initial draft of the revised Winchester plan, known in the jargon as the 'Reg 18' plan. The headline is the need for Winchester to deliver over 690 new dwellings per year over the period of the plan out to 2040. Of the consultation comments on the plan many of the potential remedies fall outside the City Council's remit to address: examples are more cycle lanes, better bus services. What the City Council can, and is, trying to address is the need for all new dwellings to be built to more stringent sustainability standards, particularly with respect to energy, and requiring more measures to make room for nature and bio-diversity. The City Council voted unanimously to declare a Nature Emergency in addition to the Climate Emergency so these provisions are both timely and welcome.

For the South Downs plan, all parish councils should have received an invitation to a workshop in the Meon Hall, Meonstoke on the evening of Wednesday 6 December where the review process will be explained together with how the Park will engage at that level prior to producing its own 'Reg 18' draft in 2025. The Parish Priority Statements will feed into that process. The intention is that, as that draft is compiled, the City Council will similarly conduct member workshops to determine how the two plans might work together.

Local Planning Cases

We seem to have a relatively large number of planning cases at the moment where our direct engagement with the planning committee has been requested. We will report back on each of these as appropriate as the planning process rolls on. Whilst we are very happy to speak in support of local views to the Planning Committee it is almost invariably more effective for cases to be referred through the volume of individual local objections (or indeed messages of support) to demonstrate a wide base of views. It is always useful if Parish Councils are able to encourage their parishioners to 'put their heads above the parapet' and make their views known via the Winchester or South Downs website registers of planning applications.

Warmer Homes Programme

Your attention is drawn to Kevin Reed's e-mail to Parish Clerks 1121 October 18th 2023 setting out the benefits available through the Warmer Homes Programme and available, on a means tested basis, to all off-gas grid private owner-occupied or private rental households. Unfortunately, neither social housing nor housing association homes are eligible. Parish Councils are asked to disseminate this scheme through local channels.

Neil Bolton
Jerry Pett

Winchester City Council Ward Members for Upper Meon Valley