



Welcome

This is an opportunity to learn more about a small affordable housing development on a Rural Exception Site in Winchfield, talk with those involved in the project, ask questions and provide your feedback.

We are here to hear your views & answer your questions



Winchfield Parish Council

Cllr Meyrick Williams

Cllr Louise Hodgetts



Hart District Council (Housing)

Nicola Harpham

Gemma Watts



English Rural Housing Association

Nick Hughes

Jade Clark

Please pick up a FAQ leaflet.

A copy of all the information boards are available on the WPC website.

<http://www.winchfield-pc.org.uk>



Scan the QR code to
view on your phone

Your feedback is important.

Please return a feedback form in the drop box provided or send via email by **Friday 4th August.**

winchfieldparishclerk@outlook.com

Rural Exception Site – activities to date

- In late 2020 Winchfield Parish Council (WPC) engaged with Action Hampshire (AH), a registered housing charity, and Hart District Council (HDC) to explore the need for affordable homes in the parish. A Housing Needs Survey was prepared, distributed to all households in the parish and resulted in a 40% response rate identifying the need for six to eight affordable homes.
- In Sept '21, WPC accepted the report and a Working Group was set up with representatives from AH, HDC (housing) and two Winchfield Parish Councillors. WPC confirmed that a project should be initiated to determine the viability of a Rural Exception Site (RES) in the parish which would provide affordable homes, available in perpetuity, to those who have a direct connection with the parish.
- A process was initiated to contact landowners in the parish to determine the availability of any suitable land for the RES. Several sites were put forward for consideration.

Rural Exception Site – activities to date

- In Q1 '22, three organisations were invited to tender to become the housing provider. A formal selection process was followed which included interviews, an assessment against a scoring matrix and follow up references. English Rural (ER) was duly appointed and is now represented on the Working Group.
- The planning team at HDC has been involved with assessing the two potential sites and have provided some initial informal advice regarding the suitability of both schemes in line with national and local planning policies. The Working Group will continue to use this information to assess the suitability of both sites and to help inform which site to take forward.
- The first of a series of public consultations to obtain feedback on an outline development on the proposed sites was held online in February '23.
- Preliminary discussions have been held between ER and landowners to mature the viability of the sites.

The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan & affordable housing

- The current Plan was 'made' (adopted) in 2017 prior to the adoption of the Hart Local Plan in 2020 and the publication of a revised National Planning Policy Framework in 2021. It was therefore 'out of step' with national and local planning policies. As a matter of good practice the Parish Council determined that it would be appropriate to review the Plan.
- The prospect of a significant housing development in Winchfield has been considered by Hart District Council for many years.
- In November 2018, the District Council, in partnership with Gallagher Estates and Lightwood, published a Shapley Heath Garden Community Vision Document for potentially 5,000, and up to 10,000, homes predominantly located within Winchfield.
- The draft Hart Local Plan submitted to the Inspector in 2019 included a policy to proceed with such a development. The Inspector rejected this policy due to concerns with the supporting evidence, specifically the sustainability appraisal and inadequate evidence on deliverability. The policy was not needed to meet the identified housing requirement during the plan period and the Inspector recommended its deletion. Accordingly, to prevent the plan being found unsound the District Council removed any reference in the current Local Plan.

The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan & affordable housing

- Concurrently the District Council applied to the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to be considered in the Garden Community programme.
- By November 2021, when government funding had failed to meet the levels that MHCLG advised the District Council to expect, the project was concluded. The District Council's position is that it will take the learning from the Garden Community project, including ten evidence base reports commissioned as part of the project, into consideration when it prepares the next plan when reasonable alternatives for significant housing growth will be considered.
- Winchfield Parish Council therefore assessed the prospect of major development to still exist and determined to review and update its existing Neighbourhood Plan to seek the support of the local community to develop a vision for the parish which would need to be formally considered at any future review of the Local Plan.

Affordable Housing – Policy BE2 of the draft WNP

- The WNP policy for a RES enables the opportunity to address a clear affordable housing need.
- Locations for sustainable affordable homes in Winchfield are reliant on willing landowners ready to provide land at or close to nil value.
- Any development would be subject to appropriate and applicable planning regulation.

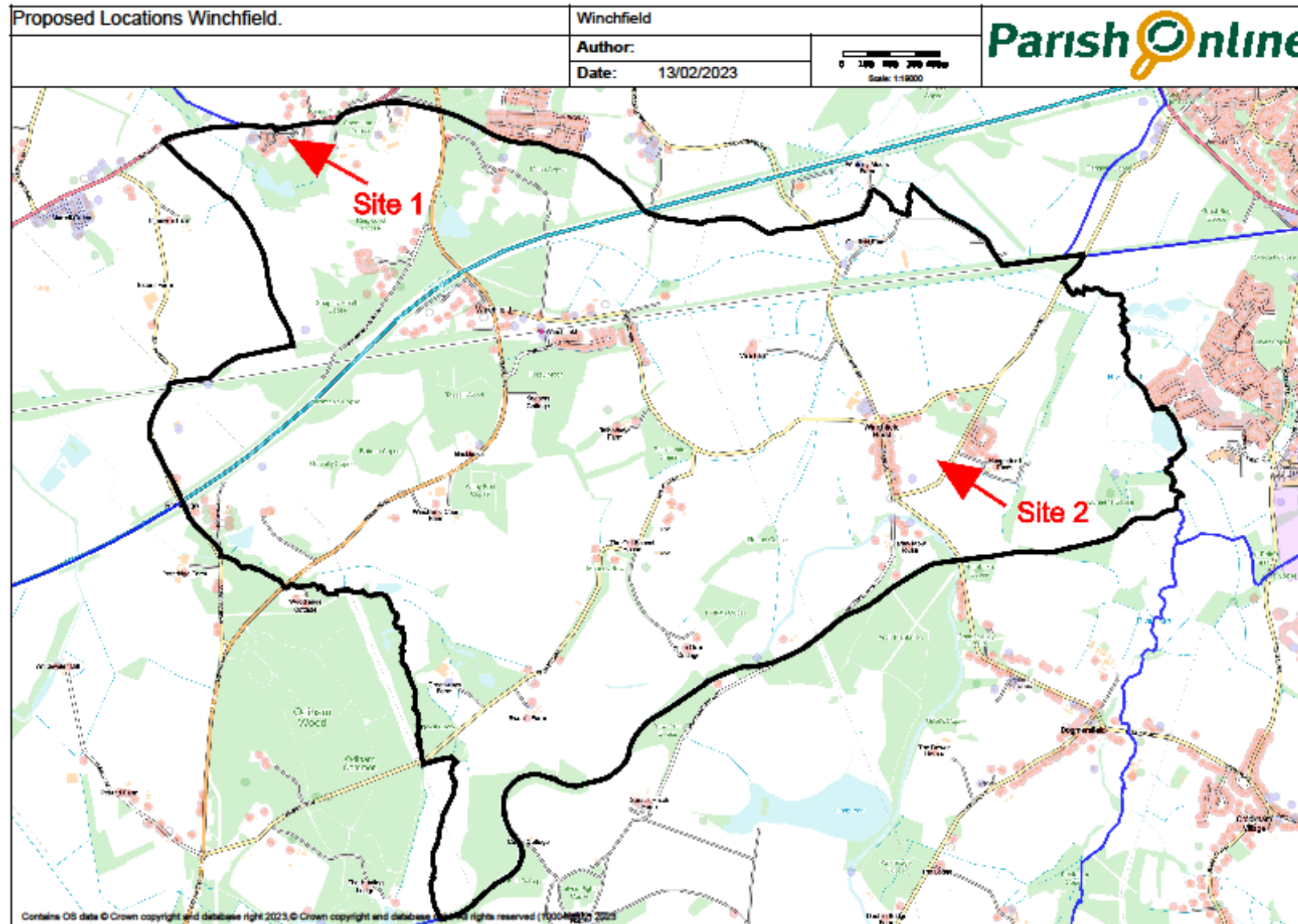
Policy BE2: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

- Proposals for the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes, on rural exception sites outside the settlement boundary, where housing would not normally be permitted by other policies, will be supported where there is a proven local need, and it reflects the findings of the Winchfield Housing Needs Survey provided that the housing:
 - a) remains affordable in perpetuity; and
 - b) is for people that are in housing need because they are unable to buy or rent properties in the village at open-market prices; and
 - c) is offered, in the first instance, to people with a demonstrated local connection because they already live in the parish, are closely related to an existing resident or work within the immediate area.
- Where there is no need, a property should then be offered to those with a demonstrated need for affordable housing in neighbouring villages. These requirements will be delivered through a legal agreement attached to the planning permission for the housing development.

Policy BE2: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

- Any application for affordable housing in respect of this policy should be accompanied by a specific detailed assessment of the need and the accommodation proposed should contribute to meeting this proven need. A small number of market homes will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated:
 - a) that no other means of funding the construction of the affordable homes is available; and
 - b) the market housing is subsidiary to the affordable housing element of the proposal and the amount of market housing required is, as demonstrated through a viability assessment, the minimum required to deliver the affordable housing.
- Where sites for affordable housing in the countryside are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area.

Proposed Sites in Winchfield



Site 1

This is an illustrative plan to show what a rural exception site could look like on site 1.

The site is comprised of a mix of houses to match the findings of the housing needs survey:

- 2 x 1 bed flats
- 3 x 2 bed houses
- 1 x 3 bed houses

To support viability and affordability of the development 2 x 4 bed open market custom build plots could be made available.



Site 2

This is an illustrative plan to show what a rural exception site could look like on site 2.

The site is comprised of a mix of houses to match the findings of the housing needs survey:

2 x 1 bed flats
3 x 2 bed houses
1 x 3 bed houses

To support viability and affordability of the development 2 x 4 bed open market custom build plots could be made available.



What is a Rural Exception Site?

- A Rural Exception Site is a site that sits outside or adjacent to the settlement boundary, which would not normally be given planning consent for housing but may be considered where it provides affordable homes for local people. The sites are small developments of affordable accommodation in villages and can provide affordable homes for sale, shared ownership and for rent. The schemes are designed to meet local need and to enable people to remain living in an area where they may have grown up and have other family members. Some market housing may be permitted as part of a rural exception scheme where it would facilitate the provision of affordable accommodation to meet local needs.
- Homes can only be brought forward on these sites if there is a proven local need for affordable housing. A legal planning agreement, also known as a S106 agreement, is put in place to ensure that the affordable homes will remain so, in perpetuity.

What is a Rural Exception Site?

- The S106 legal agreement limits who can live in the homes to local people. The criteria also apply when a new household moves into the property.
- There is a national shortage of affordable homes available to rent or buy. With the huge gap between property prices and income, many young families have had to move away from the area as they are unable to afford to stay within their community. A Rural Exception Site can provide homes for local people to live near their families and work.

What is affordable housing?

Annex 2 of the NPPF defines affordable housing as, “housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is essential for local workers)”.

1. Rented Affordable Housing

- This includes homes let at a Social Rent and Affordable Rent level. The rents are set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy and are at below open market rent levels and are paid to a housing association.
- The rent remains at an affordable price for future eligible households.

What is affordable housing?

2. Shared Ownership

- Shared ownership is a type of low-cost home ownership. It enables people to buy a share in a property and to pay rent to a housing association on the rest. When you buy a home through shared ownership, you:
 - Buy an initial share of between 10% and 75% of the home's full market value.
 - Pay rent to the landlord for the share they own.
 - Usually pay monthly ground rent and service charges, for example towards the maintenance of communal areas.
- On a Rural Exception Site, shared ownership homes cannot be bought outright and will be protected as affordable homes in perpetuity.

Hart's Local Plan Policies

HDC's Local Plan sets out planning policies for new development within the district. It is used to help guide decisions that are made regarding planning applications and to address local needs. Hart's Local Plan covers several elements including housing, business, infrastructure and environmental factors.

The following is an extract from the Hart Local Plan in relation to the development of Rural Exception Sites within the district.

Hart's Local Plan Policies

Policy H3 Rural Exception Sites

- Small-scale developments of affordable housing on land adjoining or closely related to villages will be supported provided:
 - they would address a proven local need for affordable housing;
 - the affordable housing is available in perpetuity for those with a local connection;
 - they include a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures that are informed by a discussion and agreement with the Council, including considerations of the current evidence of housing needs for the settlement; and
 - the development is in keeping with the character and size of the settlement.
- Some market housing will be supported as part of a rural exceptions scheme where it would facilitate the provision of subsidised rented accommodation to meet local needs

Hart Local Plan: (paragraphs 146 to 149).

- We will seek to meet local affordable housing needs in rural areas by encouraging affordable housing schemes that meet a local need on suitable sites outside settlement boundaries. We will work closely with parish councils and local communities to progress these schemes. In circumstances where agreement cannot be reached, we will consider the use of compulsory purchase powers as a last resort to procure any land necessary for 'exception' development.
- The development of rural exception sites will help to create sustainable, mixed communities. It will complement the overall supply of new homes in the district, making additional provision in the rural areas, but only where there is a proven local need for affordable housing. Evidence of need should be drawn from the Council's Housing Register and from surveys of local residents within the Parish. Applicants will be required to enter into a planning obligation to ensure that all affordable housing remains available for those with a local connection in perpetuity.

Hart Local Plan: (paragraphs 146 to 149).

- Policy H3 allows for a proportion of market housing to come forward on rural exception sites if it helps to deliver the rest of the development as being for affordable subsidised rent. This is to incentivise the delivery of such sites.
- The size of an exception site will depend on the level of need and site-specific considerations. As a general rule exception sites are envisaged to be up to 20 dwellings, but this would not preclude larger developments where there is an established local need. Rural exception sites should be well related to an existing settlement, for example in terms of impact on landscape, heritage assets, and the setting of the settlement. The development should also be well designed to be in keeping with the character of the settlement.

What is a Housing Needs Survey?

- Housing Needs Surveys are anonymous questionnaires that are usually sent out to every household within the parish. They provide information on the level of local housing need, in terms of size of properties, type of properties, tenure (rented or shared ownership homes), and affordability.
- A Housing Needs Survey allows us to understand the needs of local people and provides evidence to help us meet those needs. If a survey shows that there is a need for housing, the results can be used to help deliver new homes to meet that need.

The housing challenge in Winchfield

- With high average sold house prices in the Parish (standing at £629,823 in 2020), it is unsurprising that one of the main reasons for local people needing a new home is the inability to afford a mortgage or local rent levels
- This together with only a handful of existing affordable homes in the parish are the principal reasons why there is a need for affordable housing now.
- With median gross annual earnings for individual full time employees living in the Hart district standing at £37,082 in 2020, to afford an average sold property in the Parish would take 17 times the Hart median income and 23 times the Hart lower quartile income of £27,137.

Key findings from the housing needs survey

The following are key findings from the Winchfield Housing Needs Survey which supports a need for delivering affordable housing within the parish.

- 8% (9) of respondents or respondent family members stated a requirement for affordable housing within the parish.
- Winchfield Parish has 17 existing affordable rented homes. 15 of these are restricted to Armed Services personnel. Only 2 affordable rented homes are unrestricted and potentially available for respondents needing this type of housing.
- Of the 17 homes, only 3 vacancies have come up since 2012. This shows how little provision is available in the parish for those with a need for affordable housing and how long they will likely have to wait.
- Of the 9 households stating a need for affordable housing in the parish, the largest group 4 are living with family or friends, followed by 2 living in private rented housing. The others are either a homeowner, living in a mobile home or renting from a housing association.

Key findings from the housing needs survey

- 8 of the 9 households are currently living in the parish. Of these, 4 have lived in the parish for more than 21 years.
- A variety of reasons were stated for needing a new home within the parish and respondents were able to select more than one answer. The most frequent response was wanting to start a first home (5). Other frequent responses were not being able to afford rent or mortgage payments (4) the need to be independent, to support/receive care from family, the need for a larger home and relationship breakdown.
- The largest group needing affordable housing is the 25-44 years age group, making up 61% (11 individuals). It is often the younger age groups who traditionally struggle to stay in rural villages when they require housing. This is often because of affordability issues, such as not having the income levels to afford local house prices, as well as the lack of suitable homes available.

Information regarding housing needs within Winchfield

The information below shows details regarding the current known need for affordable housing within Winchfield.

Bedroom need	Number of households registered on the Hart Housing Register (As of November 2020, and included within the Housing Needs Survey report)	Number of households registered on the Hart Housing Register and identified through the public online consultation* (As of June 2023)
1 bedroom need	5	5
2 bedroom need	4	4
3 bedroom need	1	1
4 bedroom need	0	0

*During the previous public consultation for the proposed affordable housing within Winchfield (available online February - March 2023), an additional 5 households also stated that they had a connection to Winchfield and registered an interest in affordable housing within the parish. However, information regarding what sized property these households require was not provided at that time and so the information above does not reflect the need of these additional 5 households.

How will the homes be allocated?

- The homes for rent will be advertised through Hart District Council's housing register. To join the housing register, you can complete an application online via the Hart website. Details regarding any local connection to Winchfield can then be added to the appropriate section of the form.
- If assistance is required to join the Hart Housing Register, Hart's Housing team can be contacted by calling 01252 774420 or emailing housing@hart.gov.uk.
- Applicants are awarded a housing priority band (Band A - Band D) based on their housing need and are also given an Effective Date (the date that they were placed within their band).
- All homes (on first let and re-lets) will be advertised online for housing register applicants to apply ('bid') for. Applicants are able to bid for an appropriately sized home to meet their household's assessed need (in line with the Hart Bedroom Standard).

How will the homes be allocated?

- Once a home has been advertised, a shortlist of applicants who have applied for the property is drawn up. For Rural Exception Site homes, all applicants who appear to meet the local connection criteria are identified. Applications are then checked, and documentation requested to confirm who meets the local connection criteria to determine who should be nominated for the vacancy.
- Applicants will be prioritised in line with the Rural Exception Site local connection cascade process. Where there is more than one applicant who meets the same level of local connection, the applicant with the highest band award and then the earliest Effective Date will be nominated for the property.

Who will the homes be allocated to?

- A local connection criteria is applied for all sites which are developed as a RES to ensure that priority for the homes is given to those with a strong connection to the parish where the homes would be built in order to address local need.
- Each RES scheme can have slightly different local connection criteria, but they follow the same general principles which are shown below.
 - Applicant lives in the parish and has done so for 'xx' years.
 - Applicant works in the parish and has done so for 'xx' years.
 - Applicant has previously lived in the parish, or has close family members (e.g. mother / father / sibling / grown up child) who currently live in the parish and has done so for 'xx' years.
 - Applicant has a need to reside in the parish to provide/receive essential care or support to/from a family member who lives in the parish and has done so for 'xx' years.

(The required time that an applicant and/or family member has to have lived within the parish as well as the list of accepted 'family members' will vary between each RES local connection criteria.)

Who will the homes be allocated to?

- Occasionally there may be no applicants with a strong connection to the parish at the time of a property being advertised for let, and so the local connection criteria for RES schemes include a cascade process which allows homes to be allocated to applicants with a strong connection to named neighbouring parishes, and then to those with a connection to Hart if required.
- In the majority of cases, homes on a RES scheme are allocated to applicants with a strong connection to the main parish, but the cascade process is there if required so that the home can be used to help someone in need of affordable housing rather than being left empty.
- If a RES is progressed within Winchfield, the local connection criteria that is applied for the homes, including which neighbouring parishes are included within the cascade process will be agreed by Winchfield Parish Council, Hart District Council and English Rural (the housing association who will be delivering the homes).

How will the homes be protected for local people?

- A legal agreement called a S106 is used to ensure that any homes which are delivered on a Rural Exception Site are protected to be let as affordable homes in perpetuity.
- The agreed local connection criteria, including the cascade process is also written into the S106. It is legally binding and must be followed when the homes are allocated on first and all subsequent re-lets.

What happens next?

- As a project which seeks to provide a permanent housing resource for the Parish of Winchfield, your views are important.
- The schemes displayed are “sketch suggestions” and require a detailed study of planning, deliverability and finance matters before being confirmed as a single proposal for Winchfield. Your views will help inform the further consideration of each of these sites.
- Any development related activity on either site, will be for the purposes of information gathering, for example surveying . Should a deliverable scheme emerge from one of these sites, the details will be shared with the community, most likely in 2024, in advance of any formal planning application.

Frequently Asked Questions

Please pick up a FAQ leaflet

You can also access the FAQs via the WPC website

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Feedback

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Thank You