

Cllr Vicki Weston

Report for Annual Parish Meeting

Soberton Parish Council 15th March 2022

This is a very important year as the Winchester City Council draft local plan should be published for its final consultation and then it goes through the very long adoption process outlined in the diagram on page 2. We also have elections for our Ward Central Meon Valley, and for our Parish Council if residents put themselves forward.

We also need to consider the impact of climate change in everything we do.

The challenges over the last years with the pandemic and the climate emergency impacting on our daily lives, so it very important that this document address climate change. We are a rural community with great potential to offer carbon capture and storage for the Winchester District, so it is vital that all measures are considered for any form of development including for example, agricultural, equestrian, dog parks and recreational activities, extensions and new builds to get on a track to recovery with a green and sustainable economy for future generations

The IPCC report published in 2022 notes that many of the impacts of global warming are now simply "irreversible" according to the UN's latest assessment.

Climate change: IPCC report warns of 'irreversible' impacts of global warming - BBC News

The report shows that extreme weather events linked to climate change like floods and heatwaves are hitting humans and other species much harder than previous assessments indicated.

One of the fundamental principles of the current National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) is the environmental ambition supporting a transition to the low carbon economy, by encouraging energy reduction.

This can only be achieved by using:

- renewable resources and energy,
- reusing existing resources
- helping people to live more sustainable lives to minimise our impact on climate change.

Therefore, any form of planning is a vital part of the solution, to ensure that positive changes to policies around building and the natural environment are embraced.

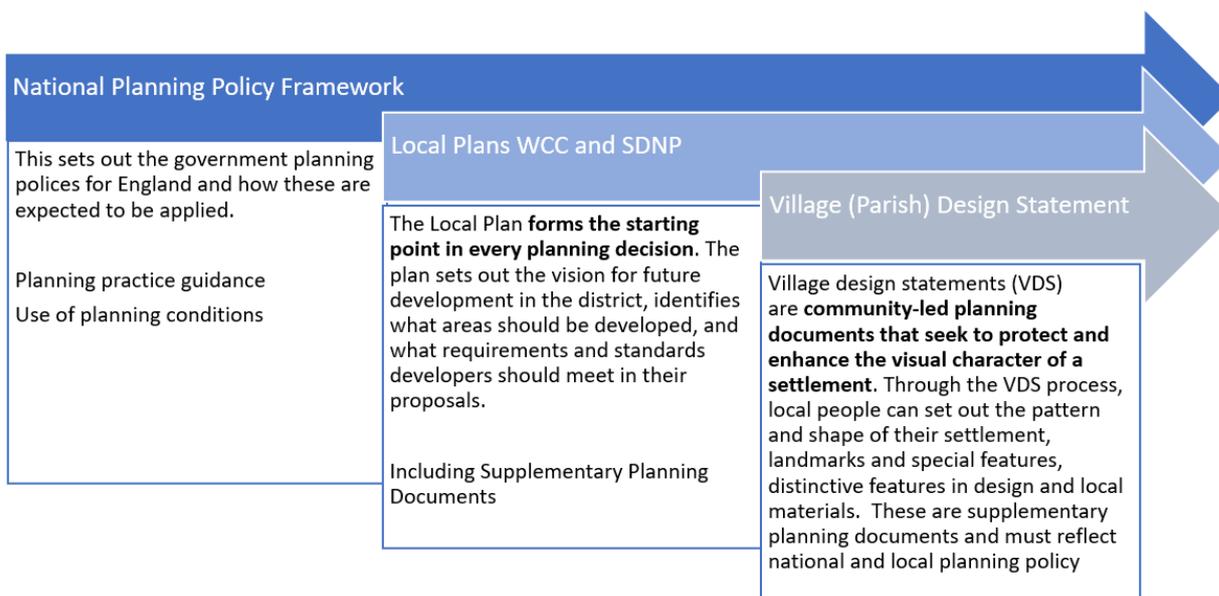
Our Local Plans can make and enforce rules to help deliver greener growth with new or stronger policies on how land can be used. However, there are many things that planning can help with, but it can't achieve everything. Therefore, it is up to local residents and developers to take responsibility and make changes in the way we live so that we can move towards a more sustainable future.

Decarbonising our lifestyles

- Reducing carbon in our energy use, building methods, travel and leisure
- Creating resilient communities and nature
- Creating environmental growth and the development and reinforcement of natural systems to protect and enhance our environment

One of the main things that Winchester City Council is preparing is the update to the Local Plan.

A brief outline of our planning system.



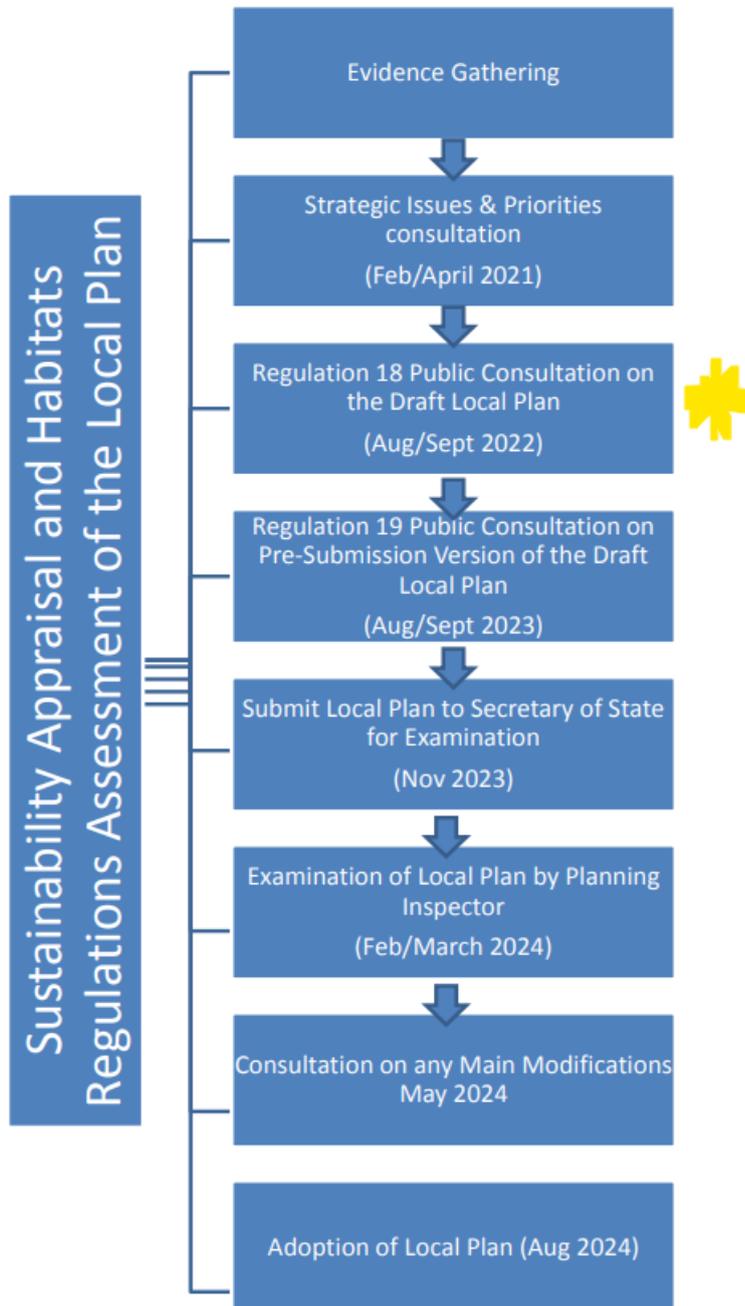
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that when working on Local Plans they should be:

- Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of the area (para 15)
- Plans should be prepared positively in a way that is aspirational but deliverable (para 16)
- Where large scale development is proposed policies should be set within a vision that looks further ahead (at least 30 years); (para 22)
- Planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy, which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth (para 82)
- Policies should set out a clear design vision (para 127)

Consultations, workshops and engagement with residents and Parish Councils has taken place to get to the current stage working towards the Regulation 18 Public Consultation on the Draft Local Plan in Aug/Sept/2022.

The housing numbers have been decided and the Winchester District will need to find land for over 1,600 dwellings and housing numbers are being discussed with local parish councils. The development is focusing on the most sustainable settlements. Whilst currently there are no requirements for the Winchester Part of our District, there is a number for the whole of the SDNP area of Winchester. This does not mean that the WCC area of the Parish will not have any new homes coming forward as infilling and 'windfall' (sites which have not been specifically identified as being available through the operation of the local plan-making process) can still occur in our villages in the WCC District. There is also the duty to co operate with other authorities (that are unable accommodate their allocations) and we are still to receive the allocations from the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH).

Where we are currently at with the WCC Local Plan process



The Council Plan: Priorities

- Tackling Climate Change and Creating a Greener District
- Living Well; all residents to live healthy and fulfilled lives with the right mix of facilities to support good physical and mental health for everyone
- Homes for all, homes that are affordable and built in the right area for the changing communities
- A vibrant local economy, restoring the vibrancy of the high streets and develop and retain the business base. And begin the transition to a greener more sustainable economy
- Providing high quality, good value, resilient services.

The council has run a number of workshops for the Parish Councils and residents and the new Local Plan will address local housing need, the economy, environmental considerations including sustainability, community infrastructure as well as strategic infrastructure needs, and is being prepared with the climate emergency at the centre of our thinking. The Local Plan is a document produced by Winchester City Council to set out what development may be allowed up to 2039. It is important to provide a high quality of life for residents, workers and visitors and this will be supported in the Local Plan through high quality place making. This is also the aim of the Government through changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Design Guide and the piloting of the National Model Design Code (NMDC) toolkit.

The ten characteristics of well-designed places check out the links below

[National Design Guide January 2021](#)

[National Model Design Code](#)



The Parish has started work to update our 2002 VDS. I urge everyone to get involved. Contact the Parish Council to get involved in area that you are interested in.

Constituency Boundary areas:

Have your say

The Boundary Commission for England is holding an independent review of all constituency boundaries in England and is inviting your residents to have their say on its proposals.

To view the proposed new constituencies for your area and share your views before the secondary consultation closes on 4 April follow the link below.

<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/>

They are also holding 32 public hearings across the country, where people can express their views in person. Find your nearest event here.

<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/public-hearings/>

Understanding the Elections

UK Parliamentary General Election

The last Parliamentary Elections were held on Thursday 12 December 2019, with the next election scheduled for May 2024. Members of Parliament are usually elected to the House of Commons every five years. The Winchester District is currently covered by the Winchester Constituency and the Meon Valley Constituency.

Winchester City Council Elections

Winchester City Council is made up of 45 Councillors representing 16 wards, with two or three Councillors per ward depending on its size. Elections are held in the first three years of a four-year cycle, usually on the first Thursday in May, with one-third of the Council up for election each year. The next scheduled election for Winchester City Council members is 5 May 2022. On 5 May 2022 there will be one seat for 15 of the Winchester City Council District Wards up for election.

Parish Council Elections

Elections to Parish Councils are held every four years, to coincide with ward elections to the City Council. The next scheduled Parish elections are 5 May 2022. There are 19 parishes in the Winchester District that are up for election and 3 of the Parish Council in the Central Meon Ward up for election. These are:

- Droxford
- Hambleton
- Soberton

Hampshire County Council

Elections take place every four years for Hampshire County Council. The Winchester District is represented by seven County Councillors. The next scheduled elections to the County Council are in May 2024.

Police and Crime Commissioner

Police and Crime Commissioners are elected every four years, with the next elections scheduled for 7 May 2024

Make sure that you are registered

All you have to do is visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote but if you do not have internet access you can call 01962 848125.

- If you are an eligible elector and you are already on the Register of Electors for Winchester, you do not need to re-register for these elections.
- The deadline for applying to register for voting in this election is **midnight on Thursday 14 April 2022.**

Casting your vote safely during COVID-19

Plans are underway to ensure that electors can cast their vote safely in whichever way they wish, whether that is at the polling station, by post or by proxy.

There are three ways that you can cast your vote:

In person at the Polling Station

Details of where your polling station is located will be found on your poll card, which will be sent out towards the end of March 2022.

If you are unable to get to your polling station on 5 May or would prefer to vote another way to cast your vote, you can register for a postal or proxy vote. We would encourage anyone who requires a postal vote to apply for one as soon as possible due to an expected increase in the number of postal votes being required for this year:

By Post

Please download the relevant postal form from the Your Vote Matters website - the deadline to apply for a **postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 19 April 2022.** Please note that you will need to print this form and complete it as a signature is required in order to complete the form.

By Proxy (appointing someone else to vote on your behalf)

Please download the relevant proxy form from the Your Vote Matters website - the deadline to apply to vote by **proxy is 5pm on Tuesday 26 April 2022.** Please note that you will need to print this form and complete it as a signature is required in order to complete the form.

More information can be found online on <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/elections>

Protecting the Biodiversity of our District

There has been a loss of species-rich grasslands in Winchester, with the area of lowland calcareous grassland decreasing by 19% between 2005 and 2018

Road verges are becoming increasingly important for our wildlife - they could support 700 species of wildflowers. They also provide nectar and habitats for bees, insects and butterflies.

WCC is running two pilot schemes on reducing cutting of road verges to keep our bees buzzing and our wildflowers blooming, by cutting back on shearing a select amount of road verges in New Alresford and Badger Farm. Cutting road verges less often can help support 700 species of wildflowers and provides nectar for insects, bees and butterflies. They are not trialling this work near busy junctions and blind corners to reduce risks and worry for drivers. This is the second year of the pilot scheme and WCC is looking to expand into the other areas over the coming months.

A resident has suggested planting sunflowers this year in our village and what a joy it would be to see an array of sunflowers this summer through the villages.

Cllr Vicki Weston

Independent Councillor for Central Meon Valley (not up for election this year!)