

Chichester District Council

Local Plan 2021-2039 Consultation

(Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012)

Consultation Response

Land West of Chichester SDL

Prepared on behalf of Vistry Group & Miller Homes

March 2023

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This representation is prepared by Tetra Tech Planning on behalf of Vistry Group and Miller Homes in response to The Chichester Local Plan 2021-2039: Proposed Submission consultation (January 2021) (“the plan”).
- 1.2 This representation follows previous representations made during the preparation of the Chichester District Council (CDC) Local Plan at Regulation 18 stage. Our previous regulation 18 stage representation can be seen at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Miller Homes (‘Miller’) and Vistry Group (‘Vistry’) have a long standing and ongoing interest in the West of Chichester Strategic Development Site currently allocated through the adopted Chichester Local Plan (Policy 15) for:
- 1,600 new homes
 - 6 hectares of employment land (suitable for B1 business uses);
 - A neighbourhood centre/community hub, incorporating local shops, a community centre, small offices and a primary school; and
 - Open space and green infrastructure, including a country park.
- 1.4 The first part of the allocation already benefits from outline planning permission and detailed reserved matters for all 750 homes and extensive associated infrastructure, including a primary school, local center, SANGs and numerous offsite highways works. Phase 1 is under construction and already delivering homes to meet local needs alongside associated infrastructure.
- 1.5 An outline application for the second phase of development of 850 homes, 5.2Ha of employment land, additional and extended community facilities, open space and SANGs and the Southern Access Road (SAR) has been submitted and is currently under consideration by CDC. The application reference is 22/01485/OUTEIA. Discussions are progressing positively with officers at CDC and West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), as well as other statutory stakeholders. Miller and Vistry anticipate a decision later this year and hope to start construction of phase 2 next year (2024). Miller and Vistry are also progressing a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with CDC in respect of anticipated site delivery.
- 1.6 We recognize the considerable work that has gone into the production of the new Local Plan and thank CDC for providing the opportunity to comment on this latest version.
- 1.7 **Vistry and Miller Support the continued allocation of the West of Chichester site via Policy A6.**
- 1.8 This representation will begin by briefly summarizing why the continued allocation of the site via Policy A6 in the Local Plan for 1,600 homes, employment and associated infrastructure is supported

and aligns with CDC's chosen strategy to focus development in the most sustainable location. It will go onto suggest some minor amendments to the allocation policy and its supporting text. This representation will then move on to comment on several other draft policies of the plan, in particular policies relating to Design and Specialist Housing. It will conclude with a brief summary.

2.0 POLICY A6 – LAND WEST OF CHICHESTER

- 2.1 Vistry and Miller fully support the continued allocation of the West of Chichester site for a new mixed-use community via Policy A6 of the Local Plan.
- 2.2 Vistry and Miller are committed to delivering much needed, high quality, homes on site along with the supporting infrastructure to create a diverse, sustainable new community to the west of Chichester. New Homes are already being delivered on site alongside the infrastructure they need, and the Southern Country Park is already proving to be popular with residents of the development.
- 2.3 Miller and Vistry are continuing their commitment to bring forward the remainder of the site demonstrated by the continued work currently being undertaken to obtain outline consent for phase 2 of the West of Chichester site. Alongside the remaining 850 new homes, the phase 2 proposals include the delivery of the SAR, connecting between West Gate and phase 1, expanded open space provision, including Norther Country Park and an artificial playing pitch, 5.2Ha of employment space and extended community facilities and primary school.
- 2.4 The allocation of the site closely aligns with the Strategic Objectives for the district being a highly sustainable, mixed-use development. We are pleased that the Spatial Development Strategy, Policy S1, and its supporting text, recognises that the West of Chichester Strategic Development Location Aligns with the spatial strategy

Focusing the majority of planned sustainable growth at Chichester city and within the east-west corridor,

- 2.5 Chichester City is demonstrably the most sustainable settlement in the district having the greatest number of facilities and services and the best access to sustainable modes of travel. The West of Chichester development's proximity to Chichester City, coupled with the careful design of the site to encourage waling and cycling, means new residents will have a genuine choice to travel by sustainable means, helping CDC achieve their climate change, health and wellbeing objectives. The West of Chichester site's location also compliments Chichester City's role as a subregional center by providing new employment opportunities in a sustainable location, new shops and facilities and new custom to existing business and services in the city. Being the largest single strategic allocation, it also makes a considerable contribution towards meeting Chichester Housing Needs, including 480 affordable houses,, improving access to safe and sustainable homes, helping to significantly boost the supply of housing and contributing to solving the acute housing crisis in one of the least affordable

district in the area.¹ The site is already delivery housing and its continued allocation enables that success to continue.

2.6 For these outline reasons, the continued allocation of the site under policy A6 is supported.

2.7 Notwithstanding Miller and Vistry's support for the continued allocation of the West of Chichester site, they do have a number of comments regarding some of the additions to the allocation policy wording and supporting text. The table below identifies the Local Plan wording on the left and our comment in relation to it on the right.

Local Plan Text	Comment
<p>Paragraph 10.20 – Phase 2 Development</p>	<p>Paragraph 10.20 accurately summarizes the proposals for the second phase of development with one exception – the pavilion associated with the playing pitches has been provided in full as part of the phase 1 permission and sized to accommodate phase 2 requirements. The full sized pavilion is currently being built out. The paragraph should be amended to reflect this.</p>
<p>Paragraph 10.21 - Increasing capacity to attenuate surface water on site, thereby reducing the discharge flows off the site below current rates, and reducing the risk of flooding to residential areas downstream</p>	<p>To avoid confusion and ensure compliance with the NPPF, this bullet point should be updated to reflect criterion 13 of the Policy A6 wording. The proposals are designed to maintain Green Field run off rates and does not increase flood risk off site, taking account of climate change. It does this by utilizing high quality Sustainable Drainage features which attenuate surface water whilst providing landscape and ecological benefits. There is no NPPF requirement to <i>reduce</i> flows below Green Field run off rates and to do so could have unintended consequences. The bullet point should be updated to reflect the NPPF requirements.</p>
<p>Policy A6 - 14. Demonstrate capacity of sewer network to accommodate the conveyance and treatment of wastewater (to strict environment standards)</p>	<p>Miller and Vistry suggest this criterion needs clarifying. Miller Vistry agree that ensuring effective arrangements are in place to deal with foul drainage is an important consideration. Working with Southern Water, the development will connect to a new pipeline effectively conveying foul drainage to the Tangmere Wastewater Treatment Facility which has recently been upgraded. Similarly, Miller and Vistry agree that high environmental standards should be applied to the treatment of sewage</p>

¹ The median earnings to house price ratio for 2021 is 14.6 in Chichester District. Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales/2021#national-housing-affordability>

Local Plan Text	Comment
<p>from the proposed development.</p>	<p>arising from all development, however this is a matter beyond the control or remit of Miller and Vistry to directly control. It is the Statutory Water body's (namely Southern Water in this instance) that have a statutory duty to meet set environmental standards as dictated by their permit. The policy needs to be clarified to make that clear. The related point in paragraph 10.21 should also be updated to reflect this position.</p>

2.8 Notwithstanding the suggested amendments to the allocation Policy and supporting text, the permitted phase 1 and proposed phase 2 development adhere to the criteria as set out, being a highly sustainable mixed use urban extension to Chichester that integrates well with the city. It provides new connections into the city, including onto the popular Centurion Way, is designed to include views of Chichester Cathedral spire and protects the areas heritage. The proposals have been landscape led to include substantial areas of public open space, including two new country parks, designed to also provide environmental and ecological benefits to reinforce the network of green infrastructure. Phase 2 also provides for an overall Biodiversity Net Gain on site. The proposals also provide for a new Southern Access Road connecting Phase 1 and phase 2 to the southern edge of the city at Westgate.

3.0 HOUSING STRATEGY AND POLICIES

- 3.1 Miller and Vistry support the overall spatial strategy toward focusing development in the most sustainable location - Chichester City. The allocation of the West of Chichester Strategic Development Location forms a key component of this strategy, being the largest single strategic housing allocation in the plan.
- 3.2 In light of the housing crisis and the continued decreasing affordability of housing in the country as a whole and particularly within Chichester District, it is important that housing continues to be delivered in sustainable locations. The latest data release from 2021 on housing affordability shows that on average **within Chichester District house prices are 14.61 times median earnings**. This compares unfavorably with the West Sussex County average of 12.07 and the national average of 9.1. Chichester District remains one of the least affordable places to buy a home in the country. Furthermore, the Plan does not intend to meet the Objectively Assessed Need for housing in the district.
- 3.3 Whilst recognizing that the Local Plan Objectives and Vision do reference Housing, it is considered that the importance of housing delivery, and its relationship to affordability, should be made more explicit with reference to the housing crisis and the acute affordability issues in the district. The vision and objectives should also explicitly recognize the important part housing delivery plays in meeting the economic, social and environmental objectives of the NPPF.
- 3.4 Furthermore, it is all the more important that policies enable, rather than potentially hinder, continued delivery of new homes as far as possible, particularly on sustainable allocated sites, such as the West of Chichester. Vistry and Miller are already delivering housing on site contributing to Chichester's housing needs.
- 3.5 The rest of this section will provide comments on each of the Housing Policies in turn.

Local Plan Text	Comment
Policy H2 – Strategic Allocations	Miller and Vistry support the inclusion of West of Chichester (A6) as a Strategic Allocation under policy H2.
Policy H4 – Affordable Housing	We have no comment on the overall proposed level of affordable housing as it would relate to the West of Chichester site. Miller and Vistry are pleased that the West of Chichester site is delivering 30% affordable housing on site in accordance with Policy H4. In regards affordable tenure, we agree that there needs to be flexibility to cater to different needs, but this should also extend to management and viability

Local Plan Text	Comment
	<p>considerations, as well as be flexible enough to respond to changes in national policy. It is suggested the Policy is reworded to make this clear in respect of affordable tenures.</p>
<p>Policy H5 – Housing Mix</p>	<p>Point 1 suggests new market and affordable homes <u>must</u> be delivered in line with the HEDNA. However, point 3 then provides exceptions – it is suggested point 1 references point 3 to avoid confusion.</p> <p>More generally, we support providing a mix of homes of differing size, types and tenures to meet a range of local needs. However, any such policy has to be flexible enough to recognise the range of needs locally and the specifics of the site and its context. Relying solely on the HEDNA and infrequently published updates to it does not fully provide this flexibility and would not allow home builders to respond effectively to changing market conditions over the plan period, which in the current economic and political climate, can occur quickly. It also does not recognise that, within the district, and particularly on large sites such as West of Chichester, circumstances may exist which require a less prescriptive approach to housing mix on site. Furthermore, the financial viability of providing a given mix also has to be considered and allowed for in any policy wording to reflect that, particularly on larger sites, too heavy a weighting on any particular size of houses can have significant viability implications. The provisions of point 3(a) provide some flexibility but is still considered too rigid to enable sites to quickly adapt to evolving housing demands.</p>
<p>Policy H6 – Self and Custom Build</p>	<p>Miller and Vistry agree that given the allocation of the site is brought forward from the previous plan and the site has already been master planned, had a concept statement agreed and is at an advanced stage of consideration, it would be inappropriate to require the West of Chichester SDL to provide any self or custom build units (as confirmed by the absence of any self or custom build requirement in Policy A6). To avoid any potential confusion, suggest the first paragraph of the policy is amended to make it clear that the requirement for provision of self and/or custom build housing on SDLs is only required where the allocation policy explicitly requires it.</p>

Local Plan Text	Comment
<p>Policy H8 – Specialist Accommodation</p>	<p>We object to this policy as currently worded. Whilst recognizing there may be a need for specialist housing for older persons, the policy as worded runs counter to the provisions of the A6 West of Chichester allocation policy and masterplan for the site, neither of which include for specialist accommodation for older persons referenced in the West of Chichester Allocation policy. Miller and Vistry made comments on the regulation 18 plan (DM2 as was) to the same affect but have had no subsequent discussions with CDC about such a requirement. The retrospective inclusion of such a requirement at this stage would threaten the masterplanned approach to the development and potentially its viability. As a solution, and assuming such a policy is justified (on which no comment is made) it is recommended that the policy is reworded in a similar way to Policy H6 (subject to our comments on that policy) to make it clear that provision of specialist accommodation on SDLs will be only expected where allowed for in the relevant allocation policy having been discussed and agreed with the relevant developer or site promotor.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, in response to comments from the Housing Officer to the phase 2 application, the phase 2 proposals do include a proportion of bungalows to cater for down sizers and older persons.</p>
<p>Policy H10 – Accessible and Adaptable Homes</p>	<p>Whilst supportive in principle of providing accessible and adaptive housing, Miller and Vistry have concerns about the implications and soundness of the policy requirement for all dwellings to meet the M4(2) accessibility and adaptability standards. The supporting text to the policy 5.53 highlights current national consideration of changes to Building Regulations in relation to M4(2) standards. It is through the national building regulations that such standards should be implemented, particularly where they are proposed to be mandatory for all dwellings. Such an approach also does not take account of the technical and financial implications of a blanket approach or potential implications on the land take required having regard to the need to make the most efficient use of land. It is also not clear how payment of a commuted sum (the calculation for which should form part of the plan) would meet the tests.</p>

Local Plan Text	Comment
	<p>If CDC do consider it necessary and justified to require a proportion of M4(2) housing to be delivered ahead of any Building Regulations changes, the policy should be made more flexible to make it clear that such provision is subject to technical feasibility and ideally a more realistic proportion.</p>

4.0 DESIGN POLICIES

- 4.1 Miller and Vistry support the Council's commitment to securing a high-quality environment and design. The West of Chichester development has been designed in close collaboration with officers and the community to deliver high quality that communities can be proud of. Miller and Vistry also recognize the emphasis at national level of achieving high-quality places.
- 4.2 Working with officers, Vistry and Miller are continuing to advocate high quality design as part of the phase 2 proposals currently under consideration. This includes not only high-quality built environments, but also landscape led design to incorporate a network of connected green spaces and a people centric layout designed to encourage sustainable travel choice.
- 4.3 In this respect, Miller and Vistry support the principles of high-quality design and are committed to delivering high quality on the West of Chichester Strategic Development Site.**
- 4.4 Miller and Vistry do however have concerns about the prescriptiveness in general of the design policies as currently drafted. The below table sets out concerns specific to each relevant design policy, but in general the design policies often dictate an overly prescriptive approach to design which risks stifling innovation and hindering the delivery of housing.
- 4.5 There is also considerable repetition between the requirements of the different design policies as well as other policies of the plan which could lead to confusion or competing policy requirements. It is suggested that the overall number of design policies should be reduced and focused on overarching design principles which that should be adhered to assist in creating high quality places, rather than prescribing particular ways of designing buildings.
- 4.6 The National Design Guide already provides a good framework for achieving high quality design on development, which has been considered in the development of the phase 2 proposals. If CDC feel it necessary to provide additional detailed design guidance specific to the district, this should be done via a separate design guide, as advocated by paragraph 128 of the NPPF, rather than via planning policy. The West of Chichester Strategic Site is already subject to a agreed Masterplan and Concept Statement which sets out the overarching design approach to the site to ensure it becomes a sustainable, high quality, place to live and work.
- 4.7 Below is a table setting out our specific comments on relevant Design Policies:

Local Plan Text	Comment
Policy P1 – Design Principles	We are in general support of this policy and its wording. However, question the inclusion of points A – C in this policy. The policy as a whole relates to overarching design principles, which is supported, but A-C are to prescriptive and relate to matters of detail which are not appropriate for inclusion in this policy and are covered elsewhere.
Policy P2 – Local Distinctiveness	Whilst supporting the principle of high quality design, a number of the points 1-9 are overly detailed and prescriptive, relating to matters more appropriately included in a design guide rather than planning policy.
Policy P3 – Density	This policy is generally supported, particularly in relation to encouraging higher densities in the most accessible locations.
Policy P4 – Layout and Access	As with Policy P2, whilst the principle of providing inclusive, accessible layouts and prioritizing walking and cycling is advocated, the policy is overly detailed and prescriptive, relating to matters more appropriately included in a design guide rather than planning policy. It is also considered the policy replicates points made in policies 2 and 5 in particular.
Policy P5 – Spaces and Landscaping	As with Policies P2 and P4, whilst the principles of providing attractive, well landscaped space is supported, the policy is overly detailed and prescriptive, relating to matters more appropriately included in a design guide rather than planning policy. It is also considered the policy replicates points made in policies 2 and 4 in particular.
Policy P6 – Amenity	<p>We agree with the need to provide suitable amenity standards for residents. However, a number of the policy points are replicated elsewhere, for example in relation to noise and lighting requirements.</p> <p>In respect of Space Standards, whilst the phase 2 of Chichester is intending to meet NDSS standards, any such policy requirement needs appropriate justification as set out in footnote 49 of the NPPF.</p> <p>In respect of separation distances, it is suggested that the 21 meter back to back distance be clarified that this is between first floor windows. Lower separation distances may be acceptable between single storey dwellings such as bungalows.</p>
Policy P8 – Materials	Whilst Miller and Vistry are committed to using high quality, sustainable materials, we have concerns about policy P8. Policy P8 is particularly prescriptive in regards to what materials and detailing should be used, for example on the types of cladding that can be used (point 9) or suggesting

Local Plan Text	Comment
	<p>the avoidance of commonly used upvc windows (point 11). Such prescription within planning policy is likely to stifle innovation and is not justified and any such points should be removed. The reference to ‘value engineering approaches’ is also not required or justified. Each application should be assessed on its own merits.</p> <p>Our suggestion is this policy be deleted and reference to the need to use high quality materials and detailing incorporated into other design policies.</p>
<p>Policy 14 – Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>Miller and Vistry are broadly supportive of this policy, having incorporated a range of measures within the west of Chichester development to enhance the Green Infrastructure Network. It is considered, given all the criteria 1 – 7 ‘must’ be followed, that some flexibility is provided for in the policy to take account of site-specific circumstances, for example, where new infrastructure to support development is required to cross an existing public right of way.</p>
<p>Policy P15 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation</p>	<p>Miller and Vistry are broadly supportive of this policy, having committed to deliver significant levels of new public open space on site. However, it is not clear from the policy what the expectations are in terms of which developments would be expected to provide indoor facilities. Given the complex nature and cost of providing indoor sports facilities, there should not be an expectation to provide such facilities unless they have formed part of the early masterplanning of the site. The West of Chichester development is masterplanned to provide space for indoor sport within the Community Building at the center of the site, along with suitable outdoor facilities.</p>
<p>Policy 16 – Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Vistry and Miller support the principle of this policy having allowed for land within the local center for a healthcare facility. However, in relation to point 1, any requirements to provide land or contributions towards healthcare provision would need to be justified on a case by case basis by the appropriate healthcare body and, in the case of the provision of land, would need a willing occupier of the site. The policy wording should be updated to reflect this.</p>

5.0 OTHER POLICIES

5.1 Miller and Vistry wish to comment on three other policies as follows:

Local Plan Text	Comment
Policy E1 – Employment Needs	<p>We have no in principle comment on the continued allocation of employment space at the West of Chichester SDL but the policy and supporting text should recognize the ever-evolving nature of the employment market and provide sufficient flexibility within the policy to allow for alternative uses to come forward should marketing of employment space generate no viable market interest. The reference to 22,000m² of employment at West of Chichester should also be expressed ideally as a land area (6Ha to be consistent with the allocation policy A6) or otherwise be expressed as an approximate quantum as detailed design and marketing considerations may mean a different quantum of employment floor space can actually be delivered.</p>
Policy T1 (and subsequent text) – Transport Infrastructure	<p>In respect of contributions towards the A27, Miller and Vistry support the confirmation in the table beneath paragraph 8.20 that the contribution to be sought from the West of Chichester development towards A27 improvements will be £1,803 per dwelling.</p>
Policy I1 – Infrastructure Provision	<p>Miller and Vistry support the implementation of infrastructure required as a result of development where it is justified and proportionate, including maintenance of infrastructure where it remains the responsibility of the developer. It is considered however that point (v) of the policy needs clarifying to make clear that the ongoing costs of infrastructure management and maintenance that come under the jurisdiction and control of statutory providers should be met by those providers.</p>

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Miller and Vistry welcome the publication of a new plan and in particular the continued inclusion of the West of Chichester Strategic Development site. The allocation closely aligns with the vision and objectives for Chichester District and will make a positive contribution not only to the supply of homes (including affordable homes) but also the local environment and economy.
- 6.2 Miller and Vistry **Support** the continued allocation of the West of Chichester site under proposed policy A6.
- 6.3 Vistry and Miller have recommended a number of modifications to the Allocation policy A6 to provide clarity and certainty. A number of recommendations for modifications to housing and design policies are also suggested to make sure the plan is properly justified and effective and enables the delivery of the housing the district needs.
- 6.4 Overall, we are supportive of the overarching aims and objectives of the plan and in particular the continued allocation of the land West of Chichester for a sustainable new community of at least 1,600 homes.
- 6.5 We trust these comments will be taken into account at the local plan examination and would welcome the opportunity to participate in the Local Plan Hearings once these have been arranged.

APPENDIX 1 – REGULATION 18 REPRESENTATION



WYG Ref: HP19007

Planning Policy,
Chichester District Council,
East Pallant House,
Chichester,
West Sussex
PO19 1TY

Sent electronically only

7th February 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Regulation 18 Consultation February 2019 - Chichester District Council Local Plan Review to 2035 Consultation Response on behalf of Miller Homes and Linden Homes

On behalf of our clients, Miller Homes and Linden Homes, I write in response to the Council's current consultation on the Regulation 18 - Chichester District Local Plan review to 2035 (hereafter referred to as 'the draft plan'). My clients have a continued interest in the land known as West of Chichester (the site) which is currently allocated through the adopted Chichester Local Plan (Policy 15) for:

- 1,600 new homes
- 6 hectares of employment land (suitable for B1 business uses);
- A neighbourhood centre/community hub, incorporating local shops, a community centre, small offices and a primary school; and
- Open space and green infrastructure, including a country park.

The first part of the allocation already benefits from outline planning permission for 750 homes and extensive associated infrastructure, including a primary school, local centre, SANGs and numerous offsite highways works. Linden Homes and Miller Homes are now progressing with a series of detailed Reserved Matters applications to facilitate commencement on site by the summer of 2019.

This representation primarily relates to draft policy AL1: Land West of Chichester, which retains the allocation of the site for 1,600 homes. The section will demonstrate that a more flexible approach should be adopted towards the number of new homes allocated on the site. This is in the context of the national need to 'significantly boost the supply of housing' coupled with the site's sustainability and excellent links to the sub-regional centre of Chichester. This would also mean the allocation of housing

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is consistent with all but one of the other policies which allocate housing in the draft plan by requiring a 'minimum' number of homes to be delivered. This representation will then move on to comment on several other draft policies of the plan as they relate to the site before concluding with a summary.

Draft Policy AL1: Land West of Chichester

Firstly, Linden Homes and Miller Homes fully support the continued allocation of the site for a new mixed-use community. Linden Homes and Miller Homes are committed to delivering much needed, high quality, homes on site along with the supporting infrastructure to create a diverse, sustainable new community to the west of Chichester. This is demonstrated by the continued work currently being undertaken to obtain Reserved Matters consents and discharge all pre-commencement conditions to facilitate commencement on site as soon as is legally possible.

It is noted that, in the main, the draft policy AL1 and its supporting text replicates Policy 15 of the adopted plan, whilst taking account of the fact that outline permission has been granted for the first 750 homes and associated infrastructure. Linden Homes and Miller Homes are generally supportive of this replication and have no comments on most of the allocation policy.

However, in the context of the national objective of 'significantly boosting the supply of homes (para. 59, NPPF 2018)' it is considered that a less rigid approach to the allocation of new homes on the site should be adopted to allow the flexibility for more than 1,600 homes to be delivered on site if technical evidence, at planning application stage, can demonstrate this can be sustainably accommodated. The rest of this section sets out why a more flexible approach to allocating homes on the West of Chichester site should be adopted to make it clear that 1,600 is only the **minimum** number of homes to be delivered on site.

The land west of Chichester has been masterplanned as a new, sustainable community which will have a range of services and facilities to support residents of the site. This includes a new school, healthcare facility, local shops, employment space and country park. Furthermore, the site is masterplanned to maximise sustainable links to the city centre by bicycle and public transport which further improve residents' access to the many facilities, services and employment opportunities Chichester has to offer. This is further evidenced by the recently approved Reserved Matters application for the primary infrastructure and SANGs, which includes enhanced cycle and pedestrian links to routes into Chichester Centre.

It is therefore considered that housing could sustainably be accommodated on site beyond the 1,600 currently allocated by marginally increasing the density across the site, particularly in areas identified for lower density development. This is supported by draft Policy DM3, which supports densities of at



least 35dph per hectare, and higher in locations with good transport links and access to services. Furthermore, government policy also supports development that makes efficient use of land, which includes ensuring that 'decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that development make optimal use of the potential of each site (paragraph 123 of the NPPF)'.

Considering this, and in line with emerging policy DM3 and the national emphasis on boosting housing supply, it seems appropriate to explore increasing the average density of the site from the current site wide average of 34dph to an average closer to 40dph due to the planned transport links and good access to services, facilities and job opportunities that the site will enjoy. This could be achieved through a slight increase in the density of housing proposed in the outer areas of the site from the current low level envisaged of 25dph to a range of 30 - 35dph. This has the potential to increase the number of new homes achievable on site from 1600 to circa 1750 without increasing the development area of the site.

Maximising the use of the site supports CDC's strategy set out at draft Policy S3. Policy S3 sets out the broad approach to development within the district. It states that sustainable planned development across the district will be focused on Chichester and within the east-west corridor. Chichester is recognised as a sub-regional centre, with access to the best range of services, facilities and employment opportunities in the district. Therefore, rather than artificially limiting growth around Chichester, allocated sites around Chichester should be given the flexibility to deliver as many houses as environmental and technical constraints allow.

'Significantly boosting the supply of housing' is a critical objective of the Government's approach to overcoming the national housing crisis (Paragraph 59 NPPF). To do this paragraph 60 requires that LPA's 'determine the **minimum** number of homes needed [our own emphasis added]'. It follows therefore, that policies that allocate sites for new housing should also adopt an approach that only sets a **minimum** number of houses, particularly in those most sustainable locations that have the potential to support higher growth. Indeed, this is an approach adopted by the Council to all but one of the other allocation policies. Removing the artificial cap of 1,600 homes allocated at the West of Chichester site would allow more homes to be delivered in the plan period and hence help provide the Council and Local Plan Examiner additional reassurance that there is sufficient flexibility within the allocation policy for more housing to be supplied should there be difficulties with delivery on other sites. This is particularly important in the context of the low level of oversupply identified by the Council of 128 homes, equating to a buffer of only 1% of the total housing requirement. Therefore, as the above has demonstrated, there is no reason why the same wording should not be used within draft policy AL1.



Any outline or full planning application which is required will be supported by a full suite of technical documents and evidence, including any additional environmental evidence required under the EIA regulations, to demonstrate how additional housing could be accommodated on the site in such a way that adverse environmental impacts could be avoided. Any changes to density on site would also still have careful regard to the character of the area and any specific environmental constraints, which may mean that some areas of lower density would still be appropriate where circumstances require. Suitable contributions (either financial or in kind) towards additional infrastructure would also be provided to support additional housing where required by relevant planning policies and an identified need is demonstrated and justified.

Taking the above together therefore, we propose that point 1 of draft policy AL1 be amended to make clear that 1,600 is the **minimum** to be delivered on site. This alteration has the benefit of providing consistency with the adopted masterplan for the site, previous adopted allocation policy and other draft allocation policies, whilst providing flexibility for the site to deliver additional housing in a highly sustainable location where detailed assessment at the planning application stage demonstrates this is environmentally feasible.

We also wish to correct an error within the supporting text to the policy at paragraph 6.13. The paragraph states that the outline application delivers a connection to Tangmere Waste Water Treatment Works. This is incorrect on two accounts. Firstly, the actual connection and pipeline is being delivered separately by Southern Water and is detailed in their planning application for the pipeline with reference WSCC/004/18/WH. Secondly, the outline permission actually allows not only for a connection to the Tangmere facility, but also allows for an onsite foul drainage facility. Whilst the preference is for a connection to the Tangmere facility, the actual foul drainage solution for the site, to date, has not been formally selected yet and both options remain open. We therefore recommend the text is amended to reflect this situation.

Policy S6 - Affordable Housing

The need for more affordable homes across the country is fully appreciated, and Linden Homes and Miller Homes have already committed to delivery of a policy compliant 30% affordable housing on the first part of the West of Chichester site, equating to 225 new affordable homes. However, the new NPPF places more emphasis on testing the viability of development at plan making stage rather than on a site by site basis (paragraph 57, NPPF). This, coupled with the Council's suggested additional requirements relating to such things as optional technical standards, stricter housing mix criteria and sustainable design standards, all place significant additional burden on a sites viability than was the case when policy 34: Affordable Housing, was adopted. It also does not appear to take account of potentially high provision of infrastructure costs required on larger strategic sites, such as West if



Chichester. The draft policy DM1 maintains a requirement to provide 30% affordable housing, and it is not clear whether this takes account of these additional viability burdens and the national policy shift towards assessing viability at local plan preparation stage.

Policy S8: Meeting Employment Land Needs

Linden Homes and Miller Homes recognise and support the need for an adequate supply of employment land to help provide jobs and services to the residents of the local area and help meet economic goals within the district. In this respect, the provision of some employment land on the West of Chichester allocation is accepted to create a sustainable, mixed-use, community.

However, the Council's planned need for new employment space is add odds with the evidence provided by the Council's own HEDNA. The HEDNA identifies a need for 145,835m² of new employment floor space where as the plan provides for a supply of 235,182m² of floor space, an oversupply of over 60%. It is recognised that the difference is to make up for forecast losses in employment space over the plan period, however, the reasons for these forecast losses are not made clear. Reference is made to 'no longer suitable sites for employment' but it is not clear where these sites are or why they may no longer be suitable. In any case, the retention and/or redevelopment of existing employment sites (which would normally be classified as brownfield sites) should take precedent over new allocations, which is endorsed by draft policy DM9 of the draft plan.

Furthermore, if the Council has particular concerns in regards the loss of employment space through Permitted Development rights allowing Change of Use to Residential (C3) use then, if they can provide suitable evidence, the Council could explore use of an Article 4 direction to help better control the loss of employment space, rather than rely on new, less certain, employment allocations.

Finally, the policy, and allocation policies which provide for new employment space, do not provide sufficient flexibility to allow the plan to adapt to changing local, national and international economic circumstances, which can change quickly and sometimes unexpectedly. Whilst recognition is given to the need for close monitoring and potentially early review of the policy, it is considered that instead flexibility should be built into the policy now to allow developers to show local need.

Therefore, given the above, it is recommended that added flexibility is provided in both policy S8 and in the allocation of 6 hectares of employment space at West of Chichester via policy AL1 to recognise the uncertainty associated with employment provision. It is recommended that instead the allocation of employment space at West Chichester be made more flexible by allocating the areas for mixed use employment and residential uses, with the final amount of employment to be determined by market evidence submitted at the time of the application. This will help ensure that the employment provision



provided meets local needs at the time of development and the land is put to its most economically and socially valuable use.

Policy DM2: Housing Mix

Linden Homes and Miller Homes support providing a mix of homes of differing size, types and tenures to meet a range of local needs. However, any such policy has to be flexible enough to recognise the range of needs locally and the specifics of the site and its context. The current, relatively rigid table is not considered to fully provide this flexibility and would not allow home builders to respond effectively to changing market conditions over the plan period, which in the current economic and political climate, can occur quickly. It also does not recognise that, within the district, and particularly on large sites such as West of Chichester, circumstances may exist which require a less prescriptive approach to housing mix on site. Furthermore, the financial viability of providing a given mix also had to be considered and allowed for in any policy wording to reflect that, particularly on larger sites, too heavy a weighting on any particular size of houses can have significant viability implications. This is currently not reflected in the policy wording.

The policy on specialist housing runs counter to the provisions of the allocation policy and masterplan for the site, neither of which are referenced in the West of Chichester Allocation policy. If the intention of policy DM2 is to allocate a proportion of the site for specialist housing, this should be clearly justified with site specific evidence in discussion with Linden Homes and Miller Homes as soon as is possible. If this is not the case, then this should be made clearer in the policy wording.

Finally, if it is the intention that the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) become mandatory then this needs to be fully justified, which does not appear to currently be the case. Linden Homes and Miller Homes understand the size and types of homes that people want and will buy and, unless there is strong evidence that the NDSS is required to be mandatory to address District specific issues regarding home sizes being provided in the district and specifically on the West of Chichester site, this requirement should be reviewed. Any evidence relating to the adoption of the NDSS would also need to consider the affect it would have on viability, land supply and affordability of new homes as required by the NPPG.

Policy DM3 - Housing Density

Linden Homes and Miller Homes support the premise of policy DM3 which aims to make the best use of land in accordance with the NPPF paragraph 122. However, the policy does not fully recognise that new developments improve the provision of transport links and access to services and hence can, in themselves, provide new opportunities for higher density development. Large strategic sites, such as the west of Chichester allocation, improve accessibility to services and facilities through the provision



of new infrastructure and sustainable links to existing centres. It will also provide new services such as healthcare facilities, schools and employment opportunities. The policy should reflect the fact that large strategic developments can often accommodate higher densities either the modification of point (a) or the addition of a new point (c) which states that higher densities will also be actively encouraged on larger strategic sites which improve access to transport links and facilities.

Policy DM16 - Sustainable design and Construction

Linden Homes and Miller Homes support sustainable design and construction and strive to minimise the environmental impact of development during construction and post occupancy and hence the aspirations of the policy are supported. However, Policy DM16 is overly prescriptive in terms of the standards and considerations that are required to reduce energy demand.

Linden Homes and Miller Homes will adopt a fabric first approach to construction of their homes on the West of Chichester site which is considered to be more sustainable than relying on renewable energy solutions which are often more expensive, have a higher embodied energy use and may not necessarily be used efficiently by future occupiers. Miller Homes and Linden Homes will consider the use of renewable sources of energy on site, such as through the provision of solar panels on roofs. However, this is not always the most environmentally or financially appropriate or viable method of lowering energy demand and this needs to be recognised within the policy text.

These points should be recognised within the policy text and the requirements of point (4) in particular relaxed to recognise the variable ways in which higher energy efficiency can be achieved.

DM32 - Green Infrastructure

Linden Homes and Miller Homes support the draft policy's aims, demonstrated by the incorporation of significant new green infrastructure within the proposals for the site, including a country park and green corridors. It is though important that the policy does not unduly hinder other policy aims, such as the implementation of key infrastructure, and this should be recognised clearly within the policy.

DM34: Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Linden Homes and Miller Homes support the provision of new open space and sports facilities to help create active communities that benefit from a high quality of life. The masterplan for the West of Chichester site already includes significant areas of public open space and sports facilities, including two country parks, a new sports facility, play space and allotments, much of which is planned for delivery relatively early in the site's overall development. This will help meet not only the needs of new residents, but also help meet deficiencies outside of the site.



The aims of Policy DM34 are therefore supported. However, it is recommended that the policy also better recognises the opportunities that can arise from relocating open space, and particularly sports facilities, particularly where that can result in improved access to facilities to a wider section of the community or facilitate quantitative or qualitative improvements to the provision in the area. Additionally, it is suggested that the policy, or its supporting text, give recognition to the benefits of sharing of sports facility space in particular between different users, for example local schools and wider community and clubs, which makes better use of space and provide opportunities for new social interactions.

Finally, it is appreciated that new development will need to provide new open space, however, the policy is not, and nor are the tables 7.1-7.3 to which it refers, clear in regards how very local need will be considered when requiring new open space or sports provision to be provided. It is also unclear how the 'Priority Sites and Projects' set out in the Sports Strategy (2018) link to any area specific requirements for increased provision. Simple adherence to the tables therefore does not seem flexible or robust enough to ensure new provision is effective at meeting specific local needs.

Conclusion

Overall, we are supportive of the overarching aims and objectives of the plan and in particular the continued allocation of the land West of Chichester for a sustainable new community of at least 1,600 homes. We trust these comments will be taken into account when the next stage of the Plan is considered, particularly those relating to the potential of the site to deliver additional homes to assist the Council meet its housing need. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the Planning Policy team.

Finally, should you require any further clarification on any of the matters raised in this response please contact either myself or my colleague, Dr Chris Lyons, on 023 8202 2800 or by email at nick.billington@wyg.com or chris.lyons@wyg.com.

Yours sincerely



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WYG

CC - Linden Homes and Miller Homes