
Chichester Local Plan Review 2034 Preferred Approach Consultation

Representations made by Barton Willmore

**Consultation on the Chichester Local Plan Review 2034
Preferred Approach
Representation**

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Prepared by:	RM	RM	
Checked by:	RS/JS	RS/JS	
Authorised by:	RS	RS	

Barton Willmore LLP
The Blade
Abbey Square
Reading
RG1 3BE

Tel: 0121 711 5151
Fax: 0121 711 5152
Email: planning@bartonwillmore.co.uk

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of a consortium of land owners who have an interest in land between Southbourne and Hambrook, which is shown in Appendix 1, in response to the Regulation 18 'Preferred Approach Consultation on the Chichester Local Plan Review 2034' which is currently subject of public consultation.
- 1.2 As previously set out in our response to the Issues and Options Consultation, we support the preparation of the Local Plan to address up to date housing and developments needs for the borough. Concerns are however raised that the overall development strategy lacks ambition and does not plan for enough housing to meet the need of the housing market area. It is considered that the significant development potential of the site to the east of Southbourne is not realised in the vision of the Plan or supporting strategic policies.
- 1.3 Appended to this document is a Site Location Plan (Appendix 1).

2.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSE

2.1 Comments are made in response to the Preferred Approach Consultation in two parts:

- a. Part 1 - the overall development strategy and relevant strategic policies to meet the future needs of the area
- b. Part 2 - Development Management policies which provide the detailed policies to help guide development in general over the plan period.

We do however raise concern that this is a 'Preferred Options' consultation yet the document reads as a final plan with no options provided. As a result, we are concerned that the ability to influence the outcome is reduced.

Part 1 - the overall development strategy and relevant strategic policies to meet the future needs of the area

2.2 Our response in relation to each of the relevant Strategic Policies and Strategic Site Allocations is detailed below.

Policy S2: Settlement Hierarchy

2.3 Policy S2 provides a settlement hierarchy to identify places in the plan area which can make a significant contribution to the delivery of future growth. This is in accordance with a key objective of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018) to promote sustainable development.

2.4 We are supportive of the allocation of Southbourne as a 'Settlement Hub' and agree that it can make a significant contribution to future growth. Given Southbourne's sustainable credentials, particularly in terms of proximity to rail and road transport links and the large number of facilities within the town itself, we agree that it would be an appropriate location to accommodate a strategic development site. To ensure the evidence base is robust, the most up to date population statistics should be used in the assessment when categorising the settlements. It is noted that there is reference to the Census in 2011 in the Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper (2018) however more up to date information should be used where available.

Policy S3: Development Strategy

- 2.5 The Policy looks to focus the majority of planned sustainable growth at Chichester and within the east-west corridor. We are supportive of this vision, in particular regarding the development of key settlements such as Southbourne, as they are inherently sustainable and capable of accommodating additional growth to help meet the needs of the District.
- 2.6 We consider that strategic development along this highly accessible transit corridor should be the focus for new major residential and employment development. However, this must be provided as part of a comprehensive strategy which looks at the provision of housing alongside the employment generating uses. In terms of transport infrastructure, whilst it is noted that the Chichester District Infrastructure Plan 2016- 2035 (2018) identifies the need for potential new road infrastructure on or around the A27, there does not appear to have been an assessment into the need for a new junction to support development and help alleviate some of the existing traffic congestion. The work focuses on the Chichester bypass however further consideration should be given to the roads in the east-west corridor.
- 2.7 A strategic extension at Southbourne would allow for such a holistic and comprehensive strategy to be achieved, as the provision of employment and dwellings in this location would help to minimise travel-to-work distances for existing and future residents of the village, as well as reduce reliance on vehicular movement through improved rail connections into Chichester.

Policy S4: Meeting Housing Needs

- 2.8 The Local Plan seeks to make provision for an additional 12,350 dwellings to be delivered during the period 2016-2035 in accordance with the findings of the Chichester Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (2018).
- 2.9 We are concerned that the strategy for allocation and delivery of new housing is conservative and lacks vision. The Plan sets out that it includes an allowance for accommodating unmet need arising from the Chichester District part of the South Downs National Park however it is not clear whether sufficient provision is being made. Furthermore, it is noted that provision has not been made to allow for the potential unmet need by neighbouring authorities such as Portsmouth (albeit not directly adjoining Chichester District). Paragraph 24 of the NPPF (2018) requires that:

“Local Planning Authorities... are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries”.

2.10 The NPPF 2018 goes on to state at paragraph 26 that:

“Effecting and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy”

2.11 It is therefore key that Chichester, as the strategic policy-making authority, have undertaken appropriate measures to work with nearby authorities in order to ensure strategic matters, such as meeting housing need, is accounted for in the emerging plan.

2.12 In this regard, Portsmouth is a major city on the south coast which will have a significant need for new housing but as an island is physically constrained. The emerging Portsmouth Local Plan is at an early stage of preparation, with the Local Plan Issues and Options Plan for the period up to 2034 having been subject to consultation in September 2017. Further consultation was targeted for November/December 2018 in a report presented to Cabinet on 6 July 2018, however this has not yet commenced. In terms of the anticipated housing need, the Portsmouth Plan Review Background Paper: Housing needs and housing targets (2017) considers the outcomes of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Spatial Planning Position Statement jointly prepared by authorities in PUSH to inform planning across the South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Importantly, paragraph 4.11 in the Statement identifies:

For the whole Portsmouth housing market area, (including all or parts of neighbouring authorities), the position statement identified a need for an additional 45,000 homes by 2034. Following discussions and technical work carried out by each authority, the Position Statement proposes housing targets for each authority totalling 41,300. The figures for Portsmouth are an identified need of 17,020 against an identified capacity of 14,560. Therefore for both the wider housing market, and for the city of Portsmouth, the PUSH statement has not identified sufficient capacity to meet the identified needs.

2.13 Whilst it is acknowledged that it will be for the Local Plan review process to determine the appropriate level of new housing to be delivered in Portsmouth, this recent review clearly identifies a significant gap between housing need and capacity. Therefore Chichester, as a less constrained authority, should be seeking to accommodate some of the unmet need.

2.14 From a review of the evidence base thus far, it is not apparent that a Statement of Common Ground (as required by paragraph 27 of the NPPF 2018) has been prepared to demonstrate that effective and on-going joint working with this nearby authority has been achieved and for the Plan to be found sound.

2.15 In addition to the neighbouring unmet need, we raise concern with regard to the method of calculation of housing need put forward in the consultation document. As per the transition arrangements contained within the NPPF (2018, paragraph 214):

“the policies in the previous Framework will apply for the purpose of examining plans, where those plans are submitted on or before 24 January 2019.”

2.16 The Plan has not been submitted ahead of 24 January 2019 (which has now passed) and therefore should be being prepared based on the policies contained within the NPPF 2018.

2.17 In this regard, the NPPF (2018, paragraph 60) sets out that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment and conducted using the standard method (currently defined in national planning guidance and as per the recent government consultation¹), unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. We note that the HEDNA (2018) has been calculated using objectively assessed housing need (OAN) rather than the standard method.

2.18 Paragraph 015 Reference ID: 2a-015-20180913 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states:

*“where a strategic-policy making authority can demonstrate **an alternative approach identifies a need higher than that identified using the standard method for assessing local housing need, the approach should be considered sound as it will have exceeded the minimum starting point**”* (our emphasis)

2.19 From the evidence base available, it has not been clearly demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist for using the OAN contained within the HEDNA (2018) for calculating housing need. Therefore, if the Council continue to use the OAN calculations in the HEDNA 2018, further work should be undertaken to ensure the method for calculating housing need is sound.

¹ MHCLG (2018) Technical Consultation on updates to national planning policy and guidance

- 2.20 Nevertheless, based on the 2014 household projections², the housing need as calculated from the standard method amounts to 609 dpa, which equals that set out in the HEDNA (2018). This is a result of the currently adopted plan being less than 5 years old, and therefore as per the NPPG methodology, the standard method is capped to 40% over the adopted plan target. If the Council's plan was older than 5 years, then the cap would be the *higher* of either 40% above the adopted target, or 40% above the household projections. Based on the 2014-household projections, this would amount to a housing need substantially above 609 dpa. This demonstrates that there is actually a far greater need within the District, which is only capped as a result of the Council's recently adopted plan. As a proactive responsible authority, the Council should be looking forward to ensure that the full needs to the District are met by providing for a higher level of housing development.
- 2.21 To this end, the NPPG is clear at paragraph 002 (reference ID: 2a-002-20180913) that: *"the standard method...identifies a **minimum annual housing need figure. It does not produce a housing requirement.**"* (our emphasis)
- 2.22 The level of housing development in the Plan is based on 'Option 1: 650 dwellings per annum (dpa)' as detailed in the Sustainability Appraisal for the Chichester Local Plan Review – Preferred Approach (October 2018). It is set out that the primary benefits of this option are economic – by meeting the objectively assessed need (plus the unmet need from the SDNPA in Chichester District). This would seem to be a very conservative approach and does not realise the benefits economically and socially that a higher level of development can bring in terms of additional infrastructure and support for economic growth within the District. Neither, as discussed above, does it account for need beyond its boundaries. From a review of the evidence, there are also significant risks associated with this approach to housing need as there is limited buffer should supply and delivery issues arise during the Plan period.
- 2.23 We consider Option 3 to be more appropriate because, as detailed in the Sustainability Appraisal, 'Option 3: 1000 dpa' is likely to meet part of a wider housing need (beyond local) with additional benefits such as affordable housing, which is critical in Chichester as Chichester have a high ratio of 13.49³, which is one of the highest outside London.

² MHCLG (2018) Technical Consultation on updates to national planning policy and guidance

³ ONS (2018) House Price to workplace-based earnings ratio

- 2.24 Positive impacts from this option are also predicted for the use of low and zero carbon technologies given that most sites will be large enough to incorporate a full range of such technologies.
- 2.25 Economic impacts will generally be positive and the potential Air Quality impacts could be better mitigated by more significant transport infrastructure improvements which can be supported by a higher level of development. In view of the wider benefits, we consider that this approach should be taken forward and would help the Council fulfil their Duty to Cooperate.
- 2.26 Overall, we do not consider that clear justification has been provided for not taking forward this approach, when taking account of the matters set out above.

Policy S6: Affordable Housing

- 2.27 Policy S6 sets out that the provision of affordable housing will be required for at least 30% of all new dwellings subject to a number of criteria.
- 2.28 We support the policy to provide affordable housing, as Chichester District has one of the highest affordability ratios in the county outside London. However, the policy does not appear to allow sufficient consideration to be given to other benefits provided by a development where it may mean that the provision of at least 30% affordable housing is not viable. Where a proposal is unable to meet the requirements for the delivery of affordable housing due to it rendering the proposal financially unviable, provision should be made in the policy for this to be offset where significant benefits such as wider infrastructure improvements are delivered through a scheme.
- 2.29 Furthermore, we do not consider it appropriate that a Neighbourhood Plan can increase the level of affordable housing above that detailed in Policy S6, as this threshold is already subject to rigorous testing at Local Plan stage, including viability testing of the threshold imposed. Neighbourhood Plan examination is not subject to the same level of testing and rigour.
- 2.30 The Affordable Housing policy is, as per paragraph 20 of the NPPF 2018, a strategic policy in the emerging Local Plan. The NPPF 2018 is clear at paragraph 17 that *“Strategic policies can be produced in different ways...they can be contained in a) joint or individual local plans...”*. Policy 18 goes on to say that *“policies to address non-strategic matters should be included in local plans that contain strategic and non-strategic policies, and/or in local or neighbourhood plans that contain **just** non-strategic policies”*. (our emphasis)

- 2.31 It is clear from the wording within the NPPF 2018 that Neighbourhood Plans should only include non-strategic policies. Therefore, it would be contrary to the NPPF 2018 for the matter of affordable housing provision to be amendable through the Neighbourhood Plan process. As such, the target set out in the Local Plan should remain applicable for all sites.

Policy S8: Meeting Employment Land Needs

- 2.32 The policy sets out that to contribute towards sustainable economic growth, provision will be made for a net additional 145,835 sq.m of new floorspace for uses in the B Use Classes (B1, B2 and B8). We are concerned that there does not appear to be a clear vision as to the type of place being created by 2034 and how employment is a part of this. As detailed in the HEDNA (2018) employment, commuting, migration and population are all affected by one another. As such, it is very important that there is an overall vision which considers all these factors in the round.
- 2.33 It would seem that a very 'traditional' approach to employment provision is being taken and concern is raised that in view of the period of the Plan, there are likely to be significant changes in the ways that people work. For example, more home working may mean that the need for standard office development reduces during the Plan period but residents are still working in the borough. This type of workforce does not appear to be fully considered in the Plan and the policy should be written to acknowledge this. It is noted that a more flexible approach is being applied to retail provision in view of the changing ways that people shop and consider that a similar more proactive approach should be taken to other employment uses.
- 2.34 In addition, we are concerned that the Employment Land Review Update (2013) and Employment Land Review (2009) which form part of the evidence base are out of date. Up to date information should be used to develop a robust strategy and policy.

Policy S9: Retail Hierarchy and Sequential Approach

- 2.35 We are supportive of the policy to protect existing retail centres. However, we are concerned that the policy does not make sufficient provision for the scale of retail which could be supported by a new strategic development. The policy sets out that additional provision of facilities to a scale appropriate to the existing settlement or the planned expansion of that settlement will be welcomed by the Council provided that it adds to the range and accessibility of goods and services.

- 2.36 There should be a further provision made for large scale/strategic developments where a greater retail provision can be supported without having a negative impact on the main centre.

Policy S10: Policy S10: Local Centres, Local and Village Parades

- 2.37 As detailed above, we consider that there should be a further provision made for large scale/strategic developments where a greater retail provision can be supported without having a negative impact on the main centre.
- 2.38 The policy as currently worded does not appear to correlate with Policy S9 which welcomes the expansion and additional provision of retail facilities *“to a scale appropriate to the ... planned expansion of that settlement...”*, as it restricts town centre uses outside local and village centres to 250sqm or less. The wording of the policy should be revised to allow for appropriate scale retail provision to support the expansion of a settlement.

Policy S12: Infrastructure Provision

- 2.39 Policy S12 sets out that the Council will work with neighbouring councils, infrastructure providers and stakeholders to ensure that new physical, economic, social, environmental and green infrastructure is provided to support the development provided for in this Plan.
- 2.40 We support this policy however additional provision should be made to allow for significant infrastructure improvements to be part funded by the Council or through grant funding where they are of wider benefit than simply being required to make a development acceptable. We would suggest that given the importance of the east-west corridor to realising the Council’s vision, funding should be sought from Highways England and the Housing Infrastructure Fund. This does not appear to be detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016-2035). Furthermore, in view of the level of development proposed in the District and the importance of Chichester and the east-west corridor, a detailed study should be carried out reviewing the infrastructure provision in this area as a whole. This is of particular importance as improvements to the transport infrastructure will help unlock development.

Policy S23: Transport and Accessibility

- 2.41 We consider that the policy should make it clear that the list of works detailed in the policy is not exhaustive as not all development land is being allocated in the Plan.

2.42 For example, the Plan leaves the allocation of 1250 homes in Southbourne to the Neighbourhood Plan Group. However, a strategic development at Southbourne could help to deliver a new junction onto the A27, a new access onto the A259 and a new overbridge over the railway, though these are not referenced. By not identifying such significant works, there is concern that the opportunity to make these improvements to the transport infrastructure may be missed.

Other Strategic Policies

2.43 We support the objectives of the following policies in the Plan:

Policy S20: Design

Policy S21: Health and Wellbeing

Policy S26: Natural Environment:

Policy S27: Flood Risk Management:

Policy S28: Pollution

Policy S29: Green Infrastructure

Policy S31: Wastewater Management and Water Quality

Policy S32: Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites

Policy AL13: Southbourne Parish

2.44 In Southbourne, the spatial vision sets out that it will take advantage of the village's good transport links and existing facilities to deliver significant new residential-led development which will further enhance local facilities and offer opportunities to reinforce and supplement existing public transport, including bus routes. This is set out in Policy AL13: Southbourne Parish.

2.45 However, although we support the vision, it is considered that it does not take a sufficiently proactive approach to promoting new development. To realise the potential of this area, a clear strategy should be set out detailing potential infrastructure improvements required to facilitate a new residential-led development in this location. This should go beyond 'taking advantage' of existing good transport links and identify the potential new infrastructure improvements that could alleviate key issues locally such as air quality and traffic congestion.

- 2.46 A strategic development to the east of Southbourne could help to deliver a new junction onto the A27, a new access onto the A259 and a new overbridge over the railway, to support both the existing and future residents and alleviate traffic congestion on Stein Road through Southbourne. Piecemeal development is not capable of providing such benefit. Further guidance is important to ensure the development has a positive impact on the existing settlement. Such improvements are not identified in Policy AL13 and it is considered that this omission fails to realise the development potential of the area.
- 2.47 There is significant potential for this area to contribute to providing much needed housing within the Chichester District. The cap of 1250 homes for a site based on delivery (set out in the Sustainability Appraisal) appears to be without justification and is at odds with the *minimum* figure of 1250 set out in the Local Plan. It is considered that the area to the east of Southbourne could deliver a much higher level of development than that set out in the Plan and, as detailed above, has the ability to provide more significant infrastructure improvements. Furthermore, it is considered that this area could accommodate a greater level of development during the Plan period and in the future than the land to the west of Southbourne given that it is less constrained and set further from the nearest neighbouring settlement.
- 2.48 It is noted that Policy AL13 allows flexibility for the development quantum to be masterplanned as extensions potentially at more than one site. A piecemeal approach would not be able to facilitate the significant infrastructure improvements that a single strategic development could offer, which could both mitigate the impact of the development, as well as improve the existing situation, for the existing community.
- 2.49 We agree that it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan for Southbourne allows for the community to determine the location for new development. However, it is considered there should be more guidance in the Plan given that such a significant level of development is proposed in this area. It is our view that as a minimum there should be a broad area of search detailed in the Plan identifying the area to east of Southbourne as being most appropriate to provide significant new development and meet the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. For example, this site would further be able to facilitate an improved Green Ring and pedestrian and cycle links between Southbourne, the railway station and the wider development. The development would be capable of providing greater access to green spaces, in order to promote healthy lifestyles, and would connect the business park to the railway station as an alternative mode of transport to the private vehicle.

2.50 A development in Southbourne would accommodate both residential and mixed-use development, which could include a business park on the A27 corridor, and further education, retail, leisure and tourism uses that are employment generating for the local communities. These would complement, but not conflict with, the existing provisions of Southbourne. This would support the vision set out in the Plan which to grow and develop Southbourne's role as a 'settlement hub'. However, there is concern that there is insufficient flexibility and a limited range of uses detailed in this policy to enable such a development.

Part 2 - Development Management policies which provide the detailed policies to help guide development in general over the plan period.

2.51 We are generally in support of the Development Management Policies set out in the Preferred Approach Consultation though reserve the right to make comment at later stages in the consultation process. Some additional comments on specific policies are detailed below:

DM2 Housing Mix – There is concern that the housing mix detailed in the policy is too prescriptive as the table contained within this policy details a mix which is to be applied districtwide. It is important that housing mix reflects local housing needs at the time of an application, and also reflects the surrounding context and character of an area. Therefore, in order for the policy to be justified, it should be worded to meet local need (using latest up to date evidence) as well as reflect local character.

DM3 Housing Density – We are supportive of the approach that a minimum density for new development is provided. This should however be considered in view of the character of the area to ensure development is of an appropriate scale.

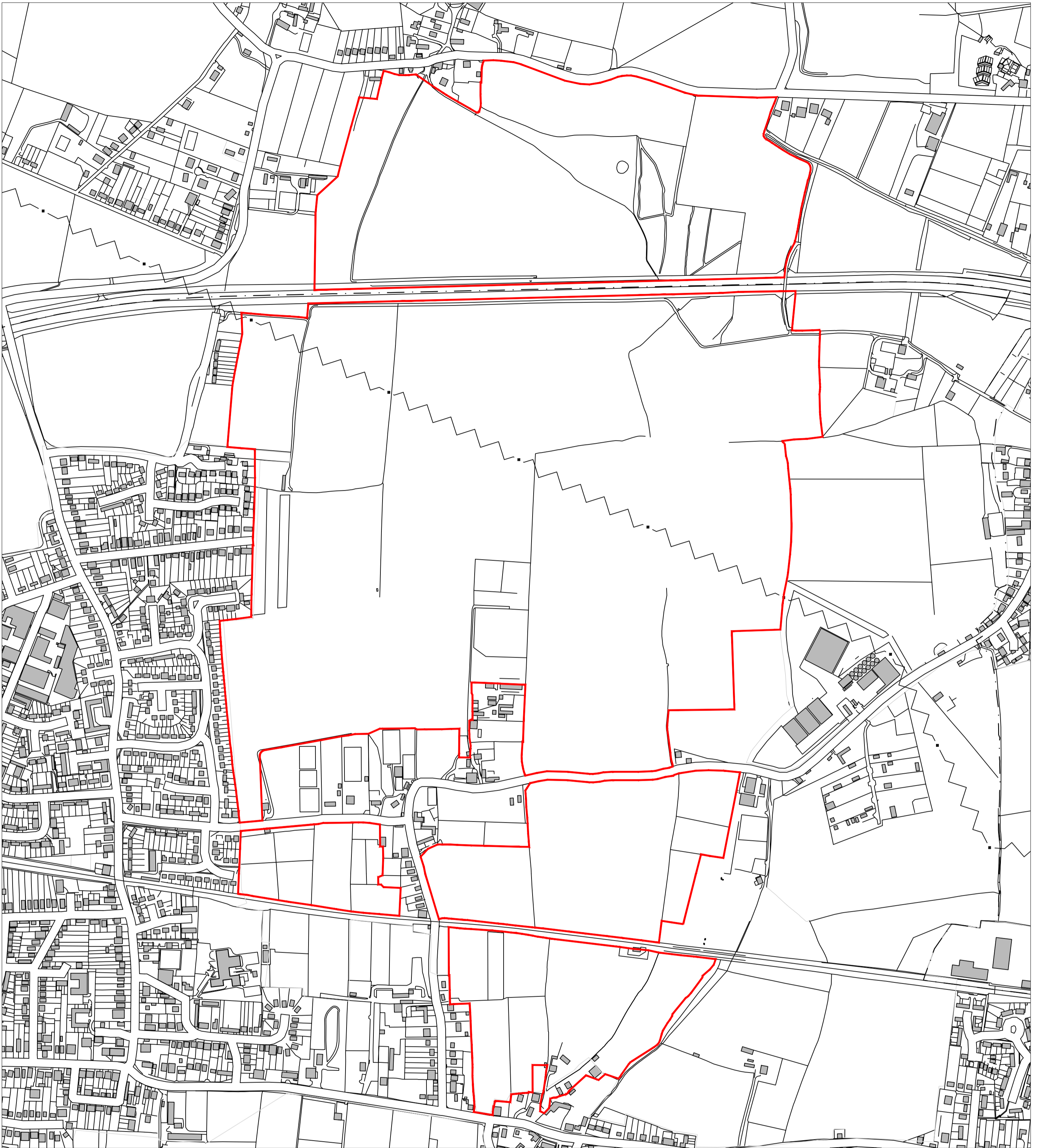
DM7 Local and Community Facilities – We are supportive of this policy though note that it does not appear to make provision for community facilities to be provided as part of a new development.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Whilst we are generally supportive of the Plan, we have raised significant concerns regarding the overall approach to housing provision which appears to focus on meeting minimum levels rather than ensuring that a wider need is met during the Plan period. In addition, there is little contingency in the housing supply should a development not come forward or be subject to delay. We consider that the vision in the Plan does not appear very ambitious and we are concerned that it does not give a clear picture of the type of place that the Chichester District will be in 2034.
- 3.2 Overall, we are supportive of the allocation of Southbourne as a Settlement Hub and agree that it can make a significant contribution to future growth. However, we consider that the development potential of the site to the east of Southbourne is not realised in the vision or supporting strategic policies. We consider that a higher level of development can be accommodated in this area, to both meet increased housing need and to support significant infrastructure improvements to the benefit of the existing settlement and new residents.
- 3.3 Whilst it is understood that a site allocation is proposed to be made as part of the Neighbourhood Plan, we are of the view that more guidance should be provided in the Plan identifying the most appropriate location as being to the east of Southbourne. This would help ensure that the benefits that a large major development can bring are realised and would allow wider transport infrastructure improvements to be identified at Plan stage. The approach taken to employment provision in the Plan is very traditional and concern is raised that in view of the period of the Plan to 2034, there are likely to be significant changes in the ways that people work which are not reflected in the vision or policies.
- 3.4 As detailed above, we consider that further work is required to provide a clear and deliverable vision and for the plan to be found sound. In particular, we would support changes to the Plan which realise the full potential of the site to the east of Southbourne to help the changing needs of the current and future population.

APPENDIX 1.0

SITE LOCATION PLAN



— Site Boundary -
147.37Ha / 364.16Ac

Project
**Land Search Administration,
Southbourne**
Drawing Title
Site Boundary Plan



Date 05.07.17	Scale 1:5,000@A2	Drawn by K.D.	Check by T.L.
Project No 27783	Drawing No RG-M-01	Revision A	



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