

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
WINCHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Cllr Meyrick Williams (Chairman), Cllr Cepta Hamm, Cllr Louise Hodgetts and Cllr Richard Milnes-James (Winchfield Parish Council – WPC),
Cllr Anne Crampton, Hart District Council (HDC)
60 Members of the public
Mrs Alison Ball (Clerk)

It was noted that joining the meeting virtually were Cllr Kate Stewart (WPC) and two planning consultants from Troy Planning.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Kate Stewart (WPC) who joined the meeting virtually.

Apologies were also received from Cllr R Quarterman, Hampshire County Council (HCC), Cllrs Tim Southern and Spencer Farmer, HDC, the Litter Pick Co-ordinator and the Footpaths Warden.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS UNDER S33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

None.

3. 26/01201/OUT LAND AT MURRELL GREEN, LONDON ROAD, MURRELL GREEN

The Chairman gave a detailed presentation concerning the outline planning application for the proposed development at Murrell Green and its potential implications for Winchfield and the surrounding area.

The presentation covered the nature of the outline planning application, why the application was being considered outside the Local Plan process, changes to national planning policy, the potential impact on Winchfield and the local area, work undertaken by WPC, the areas being explored and assessed, and the proposed next steps.

Outline Planning Application

The meeting was reminded that an outline planning application was intended to establish whether a development was acceptable in principle, with certain detailed matters being reserved for consideration at a later stage.

The presentation explained that the outline application established matters including:

- Use – what the land was proposed to be used for;
- Amount – the scale of the development, including the number of homes proposed;
- Access – where people and vehicles would enter and leave the site; and
- Location and site plans – identifying the position and extent of the proposed

development.

The detailed matters which could be reserved for later consideration included appearance, landscaping, layout and scale, including the height, width and length of buildings and housing density.

It was noted that major planning applications would usually be subject to a decision period of approximately 13 weeks. If outline permission were granted, a subsequent reserved matters application would be required before development could proceed, normally within a specified period, which was usually three years.

Murrell Green / Lightwood Land Proposal

The meeting considered the scale and nature of the application submitted by Lightwood Land.

The application was for an outline, phased, residential-led mixed-use development, with all matters reserved except access. The proposal included the demolition of existing buildings and structures and the provision of vehicular, cycle and pedestrian accesses.

The application description set out the proposal as including:

- up to **2,160 residential dwellings**;
- three vehicular accesses from the **A30 London Road**;
- one access from the **B3016 Odiham Road**;
- employment uses, a local centre and community uses (including education provision);
- blue and green infrastructure including sustainable drainage systems, public open space, sports pitches with pavilion, wildlife areas, Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG); and associated supporting infrastructure and works.

The scale of the proposal was noted as potentially representing a substantial new development and effectively creating a new settlement in the area. Approximately 700 of the new houses would fall within the boundary of Winchfield Parish Council and would triple the size of the current village in terms of housing numbers.

At the meeting a plan of the proposed development area was displayed. Specifically pointed out was Brenda Parker Way, a significant footpath, which sat through the centre of the proposed housing and would be crossed by two new roads. This footpath was an ancient path, home to many veteran trees and irreplaceable habitats.

There was a gas pipeline currently running through the western part of Brenda Parker Way which would need to be moved if planning permission were to be granted. This would likely also have an impact on the important habitats around Brenda Parker Way.

The proposal included provision of a school but this was not a guarantee that a school would be built. The Education Authority in Hampshire would have to agree that a school was needed and could be funded and staffed. If agreed it should be built it was likely that construction would take place after the housing meaning new residents would need to find alternative schooling in the meantime and travel to these schools was likely to be by private car.

The River Whitewater, one of 200 chalk streams in the country, ran through the proposed site and any run off could be catastrophic.

The proposed new playing fields appeared to only be directly accessible from the new housing on foot, travel by car could not be achieved within the development site and would involve using Odiham Road.

The SANG provision on the site was being provided in an area currently called Beggars Corner which was a historic landfill site and no investigation had been made into what lay beneath the surface in this area.

Relationship with the Local Plan

The presentation went on to consider why the application was being dealt with outside the Local Plan process. It was explained that Hart's housing requirement had increased significantly, to approximately 14,400 homes between 2026 and 2044. This had affected HDC's ability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The applicant was therefore relying upon the "presumption in favour of sustainable development".

The emerging Hart Local Plan remained at an early stage and therefore carried limited weight in the determination of planning applications. The presentation emphasised that although HDC had to consider the application in the circumstances prevailing at the time, this did not mean that planning permission had to be granted. It was anticipated that there would not be a full new Local Plan until 2028.

The Parish Council felt that a development of this scale, effectively creating a new settlement, should properly have been assessed through the Local Plan process. This would have allowed it to be considered alongside alternative development sites and as part of a district-wide strategy for housing, infrastructure and development.

It was noted that during the Local Plan process in 2019/2020 the prospect of Shapley Heath Garden Village was considered and the Inspector that reviewed that Plan concluded that it did not meet the test for several reasons, principally that it had not been assessed well enough against the other options and not much had changed since that time.

The Parish Council was committed to the right thing, in the right place for the right reasons. It was accepted that there would be change and that more houses were needed.

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework

The presentation considered the relevance of the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to the application.

The presentation identified Policy S5, concerning development outside settlement boundaries where the local planning authority did not have a five-year housing land supply, as a key policy in determining the Murrell Green application.

The application of Policy S5 at Murrell Green was expected to test:

1. whether a strategic development of this scale was genuinely physically well-related to an existing settlement; and
2. whether up to 2,160 homes could be accommodated having regard to the existing and proposed availability of infrastructure.

It was emphasised that even if the proposal satisfied the relevant requirements of Policy S5, planning permission would not automatically follow. A planning balance would still have to be undertaken to determine whether the benefits of the development outweighed its adverse effects.

It was noted that the new NPPF also prevented anyone from redeveloping a pub unless it had been proven that it could not stay open and this would need to be proven over a 12 month period.

Implications of National Policy for Winchfield

The presentation considered the implications of the new NPPF for Winchfield, particularly the presumption in favour of housing and mixed-use development near well-connected railway stations.

The presentation explained that a “well connected” station was assessed by reference to its location, service frequency and walking distance from the station. There would be a presumption in favour of development for sites within a walking distance of around 800 metres from the qualifying station, with only those portions of a site within that distance qualifying. A map was displayed at the meeting showing the areas within 800 metres of Winchfield Station and it included very little of the Murrell Green development site. It was currently unknown if any other potential development sites within the 800 metre ring had been put forward for potential development – this should become clearer as the Local Plan process continued.

Planning Application Consultation

The Council was aware that, according to the planning portal, 173 reports had been submitted by Lightwood Land and 409 comments had been received as at 2 September 2026 and 443 by the time of the meeting, most of these were objections. The Chairman encouraged all those present to submit their comments by the deadline of 18 September and to encourage all their neighbours to do the same.

A number of statutory and other consultees were identified as having provided, or being involved in, consultation responses. These included:

- National Highways;
- Natural England;
- Environment Agency;
- Thames Water;
- Wokingham Borough Council;
- Bracknell Forest Council;

All of these bodies, as statutory consultees had the power to cause a local planning authority to pause a decision until missing technical data or assessments could be provided. WPC did not have this power. National Highways had this power and they had stated that they wanted the decision delayed until at least 13 November to allow the applicant more time to provide more analysis on the impact on junction 5 of the M3.

Natural England had asked for more information on the impact on designated sites, issues with the SAG and the SANG was not acceptable. There were also concerns about the loss of the best agricultural land. The Environment Agency objected. The Surrey hills to Fleet pipeline providing residents with water was now not scheduled to be complete until 2032 at the earliest so a cumulative assessment of the water cycle was needed and the issue of providing water to such a large development needed to be addressed. Thames Water were unable to assess the impact of the development on waste water and there was no capacity at the local pumping stations.

Wokingham Borough Council had objected due to concerns regarding highways. East Hampshire District Council had also raised highway concerns and concerns regarding the provision of a water supply. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council had not yet submitted a response but work was ongoing behind the scenes to encourage them to do so.

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has raised concerns about ecological sites and protected species.

Work Undertaken by Winchfield Parish Council

The meeting was advised that WPC had undertaken preparatory work in relation to gathering information to inform a response to the proposal. This had included securing the services of specialist planning policy, landscape and heritage consultants early in 2026. The consultants were identified as Troy Planning and Stone & Meadow.

The Parish Council had set aside a healthy budget for 2026/2027 to be used to engage with planning consultants to work on a response to the new Local Plan. The Murrell Green application had not been included in the budget and it had therefore been necessary to utilise some of the planning budget for this.

WPC had also commissioned specialist studies covering ecology and highways and transport.

The Council was working closely with Hook Parish Council and Hartley Wintney Parish Council in considering the application and preparing a response. These parishes were helping to fund some of the consultants fees and in turn would benefit from these studies helping to inform their own responses. Odiham Parish Council had also committed to submitting a response based on the information in the WPC response.

The Parish Council had attended a meeting with Alex Brewer MP. She was unable to have any involvement in individual planning applications but she was able to speak to the Housing Minister to advise that the change in housing numbers was causing chaos. She was also very concerned about the water and sewage issues in the local area.

Matters Considered and Assessed

The presentation set out the principal areas which WPC had been exploring and assessing.

There had been a planning assessment which had included consideration of:

- the national planning policy context;
- the relationship of the proposal to Hart's existing and emerging Local Plans;
- the relationship to the Winchfield and Hook Neighbourhood Plans;
- whether development of this scale was appropriate in the proposed location;
- how the development would relate to Winchfield, Hook and the surrounding area;
- the potential effects on local roads and the wider highway network;
- the impact on Winchfield station, public transport, walking and cycling.

It was noted that the consultation response from Hampshire Highways had been published on the HDC website earlier in the day. It contained a holding objection, requesting further information and suggesting that the location was not sustainable.

Transport and movement considerations would include the implications for Winchfield Station. The fast trains to London went from Fleet and Basingstoke so people were likely to travel to these stations rather than use Winchfield and as there was no public transport options this would be by private car. In addition there were short platforms at Winchfield and Hook which would limit passenger numbers.

The Parish Council had engaged a Transport Consultant who had already produced a thorough draft report. He had looked at highway safety, sustainability and the reliance on

cars, congestion and environmental impacts.

The presentation advised that consideration was being given to whether essential infrastructure would be capable of supporting the proposed development and whether that infrastructure could be delivered at the appropriate stages. The matters identified included schools, healthcare, water supply, wastewater and other essential services. Whilst the development identified a new school this would only be delivered if supported by the Education Authority. The key issue was that infrastructure would only be built once there was demand, so the school would only be built once the houses were occupied. This would mean children would start at nearby schools and possibly never move to the new school within the development. This would have a knock on effect to the transport assessment and the Parish Council response would need to consider the impacts of having a school within the development and not having a school within the development.

The presentation considered the potential effects of the proposal on the rural landscape, important views and the separate identities of Winchfield, Hook and Hartley Wintney. The new development was almost the same size as Hartley Wintney. The Landscape Character Views in the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan would be used as supporting evidence and consideration would be given to the impact of the development on each of these views and on the individual character of each of the villages.

Heritage considerations included the potential effects on heritage assets, historic routes and the distinctive rural character of the area. This included Brenda Parker Way, properties in the area, pill boxes and anything that contributed to the history of the area.

Attention was drawn to the consultation response by Whitewater Health which considered the impact on GPs, medical centres and the hospital. Essentially more money would be needed to secure the level of provision needed. This also applied to teachers. Another concern was the availability of appropriate staff including doctors, nurses and teachers.

Consultants had been engaged to look at ecological matters and this included looking at the potential effects on wildlife, trees and habitats and whether the proposed green space would provide effective mitigation. Rare species had been identified and these needed to be protected along with the trees and the habitats. The application did include mitigation policies but with many habitats once removed they would be impossible to replace or may take many generations to be replaced.

The Parish Council would also be considering flood risk, surface-water drainage, water supply and wastewater infrastructure. As this was an outline application it did not contain enough information on flood alleviation or details on if there was a flood risk or not.

Work would be carried out to establish whether historic land uses and existing ground conditions had been adequately investigated and could be safely managed. Beggars Corner was a historical waste site and there was no evidence that any investigations had been carried out to find out what had been buried there. The site also showed houses to be built on a site identified in the current Hart Local Plan as a flood alleviation zone for Pheonix Green.

The presentation highlighted the potential permanent loss of a substantial area of best and most versatile agricultural land, together with the wider environmental consequences. As an outline application it did not contain enough information to provide a sufficiently complete understanding of the likely effects of the proposed development.

The adequacy of the proposed design and development principles would also be considered, including the degree of control over scale, density, movement, landscape buffers and green infrastructure. The proposed housing was described within the application as being up to three storeys which, due to some being on a hill, could have a significant impact on the main view when approaching Winchfield. There was also a reliance on urban movement design with the inclusion of roundabouts and traffic lights and questions needed to be asked about how this would fit in with the current arrangements in the area.

The Parish Council would be looking at how the development would contribute to the local housing need, including affordable housing, the anticipated timing of delivery and the extent to which the claimed benefits would meet local needs. Harts Housing Department had put in a response in favour of the application but it did not outline how the development would help meet current need in the area. The houses were unlikely to be delivered for a number of years so consideration needed to be given to the likely need at the time of delivery rather than the current need.

Particular consideration would be given to delivery and accountability, including whether proposed infrastructure, facilities and mitigation could be properly secured and delivered at the appropriate stages of the development.

The overall assessment would consider whether the claimed benefits of the proposal would outweigh its effects on Winchfield and the surrounding area.

Next Steps for Winchfield Parish Council

The meeting was advised that WPC's representations would continue to develop as further specialist reviews and consultee responses were received.

The next steps identified were to:

- encourage comprehensive submissions from Rushmoor Borough Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council;
- engage with the relevant highways agencies and Natural England;
- continue to use advice relating to planning policy, ecology, landscape, heritage and transport to inform WPC's representations;
- review the draft representations with Hook Parish Council and Hartley Wintney Parish Council;
- take account of a further response from Odiham Parish Council;
- obtain an independent review by an experienced Planning Inspector; and
- submit WPC's representations to HDC by Monday 5 October 2026.

Members of the public were encouraged to submit their own representations to HDC by the deadline of 18 September. Information was given about a website set up by a local resident specifically designed to help with compiling a response to the application: **murrellgreen.info**. Handouts were made available to attendees.

Questions were invited at the conclusion of the presentation.

Public Participation

Members of the public asked questions about the timescales for the new Hart Local Plan, whether the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan would feed into the Hart Local Plan, the proposals for Hook and Winchfield Stations and whether the new development would include any shops or pubs or similar.

In response it was advised that the Local Plan process was now a formal two year process with the first draft out for consultation for six weeks from mid-October to the end of November, with a full draft plan being made available in about a years time. It would then go to an inspector probably in the second half of 2028.

The Neighbourhood Plan was aligned with the previous NPPF and the current Local Plan. Many of the policies remained relevant and the Neighbourhood Plan still carried weight. The Neighbourhood Plan would need to be redone once the new Local Plan was in place.

The Hampshire Highways response included reference to Winchfield Station but it only included reference to the installation of more cycle racks and a mobility hub. There had not been any mention of the limited car parking or any evidence that any discussions had been had with Network Rail. It appeared that there had been discussion with Stagecoach regarding potential buses but as a private, commercial business any buses would depend on demand.

At the current time it was not thought that the new development would have any kind of high street. The provision of community facilities such as shops and pubs would be demand driven so would only be built if needed. It had been suggested that it was likely that there would only be a convenience store and a couple of coffee shops making travel, almost certainly by car, to other local centres a necessity. Only 1% of the site had been set aside for employment which meant the majority of residents would have to travel out of the development site for work, again likely by car.

It was noted that the current rules meant that any planning application for over 150 houses could be called in and decided by the Secretary of State. This was a possibility for Murrell Green which would take the decision out of the hands of HDC,

The parting remarks reminded those present to submit objections to HDC by 18 September and help with the content of responses could be found on the website <https://murrellgreen.info/>

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and paused the meeting so those who wanted to leave could.

(NOTE: On the conclusion of this item the members of the public left the room and the individuals who had joined the meeting virtually left the online meeting.)

4 SCHEME OF DELEGATION – PLANNING INCLUDING AMENDMENT TO THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Council considered proposed amendments to its Financial Regulations to provide greater flexibility to deal with urgent planning applications, appeals, enforcement matters and related consultations arising between scheduled meetings.

The proposed new Regulations 5.22–5.25 provided delegated authority for the Chairman, in consultation with one other elected councillor and the Clerk, to authorise expenditure from the approved Planning Budget for urgent professional planning, legal or technical advice, subject to the specified financial limits and controls. All decisions would be recorded and reported to the next Council meeting.

The Council also considered a specific delegation under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to the Chairman and Councillor Hodgetts, acting jointly and in consultation with the Clerk, to deal with urgent planning matters between meetings. This

included obtaining professional advice, commissioning reports, submitting representations and taking necessary procedural steps where statutory deadlines applied.

It was noted that the delegation would not permit changes to Council policy, expenditure beyond the approved budget or commitments outside the Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED: That the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations to add new Regulations 5.22–5.25 be approved as follows:

5.22 The Council recognises that planning applications, appeals, enforcement matters and associated consultations may arise between scheduled meetings where an urgent response is required in order to protect the interests of the parish. The Council therefore delegates authority to the Chairman, acting in consultation with one other elected councillor and the Clerk, to authorise expenditure from the approved Planning Budget where:

- a) the expenditure relates solely to obtaining professional planning, legal or technical advice or representation in connection with planning applications, appeals, enforcement matters or other planning issues affecting the parish;
- b) the matter is sufficiently urgent that it cannot reasonably await the next ordinary meeting of the Council without prejudicing the Council's ability to respond effectively;
- c) adequate budget provision has been approved by the Council within the Planning Budget for the relevant financial year;
- d) the cost of any individual instruction does not exceed **£5,000** (or such other amount as the Council may determine from time to time); and
- e) the decision is supported by the Clerk, who shall confirm that the expenditure is lawful, within budget and in accordance with these Financial Regulations.

5.23 The delegated authority conferred by Regulation 5.22 may not be used to exceed the total Planning Budget approved by the Council for the financial year.

5.24 All decisions made under the delegated authority in 5.22 shall be recorded, including:

- the reason why the matter was considered urgent;
- the names of those consulted;
- the consultant instructed;
- the value of the commission;
- the budget heading from which the expenditure is to be met; and
- the reasons for selecting the consultant where more than one quotation has not been obtained.

5.25 A report of every decision made under the delegated authority in 5.22 shall be made to the next meeting of the Council and entered into the minutes. The report shall be for transparency and accountability only and shall not invalidate any lawful action already taken under this delegation.

And that the following Delegated Authority – Planning Matters be approved:

Pursuant to section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council delegates authority to the Chairman of the Council and Councillor Hodgetts, acting jointly and in consultation with the Clerk, to act on behalf of the Council in relation to urgent planning matters arising between ordinary meetings where it is not reasonably practicable to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council before a response is required.

The delegated authority shall include the power to:

1. Instruct planning, legal or other professional consultants in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and approved budgets.
2. Commission technical reports or specialist advice to assist the Council in responding to planning applications, appeals, enforcement matters or related proceedings.
3. Submit, amend or supplement representations, objections or comments to the Local Planning Authority, the Planning Inspectorate or any other relevant body, provided that such representations are consistent with the Council's previously agreed planning policies, resolutions and objectives.
4. Correspond and negotiate with planning officers, applicants, consultants, statutory consultees and other public authorities on behalf of the Council.
5. Authorise attendance by consultants or legal representatives at meetings, hearings, examinations, inquiries or appeals where necessary to protect the Council's interests.
6. Take such procedural or administrative steps as are reasonably necessary to preserve the Council's position in relation to planning matters where statutory deadlines would otherwise expire before the Council could meet.

The delegated authority shall not extend to:

1. adopting or changing Council planning policy;
2. making commitments on behalf of the Council beyond the approved budget;
3. entering into contracts other than those authorised under the Council's Financial Regulations.

This delegation shall remain in force until amended or revoked by resolution of the Council.

5 DEBIT CARD APPLICATION

The Council considered a proposal for the Clerk to apply for a debit card in her name on behalf of the Council. The card would only be used where no other payment method was available, such as where online payment by card was the only option. Expenditure would be limited to £100 per transaction unless otherwise pre-authorised by the full Council, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk be authorised to apply for a debit card in her name on behalf of the Council, subject to the existing controls and limits set out in the Financial Regulations.

6 APPROVAL OF SUBSCRIPTIONS TO TEAMS

The Council considered the subscription to Microsoft Teams. It was noted that a subscription had already been taken out at a cost of £37.20 plus VAT for the Clerk and that approval was sought for two more subscriptions for councillors at the same cost of £37.20 plus VAT each. This was needed as a number of virtual meetings had been taking

place with consultants and the free version of Teams was not sufficient for these meetings particularly the one hour time limit.

RESOLVED: That the existing Teams subscription at £37.20 plus VAT be approved and that two further subscriptions, at £37.20 plus VAT each, be approved.

7 PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL

RESOLVED: That the following payments be approved:

Troy Planning & Design	Professional Planning Advice	£900.00	LGA 1972 s111
Troy Planning & Design	Professional Planning Advice	£3,300.00	LGA 1972 s111

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of future meetings were noted: 21 September 2026, 16 November 2026, 25 January 2027, 22 March 2027, 17 May 2027, 19 July 2027, 20 September 2027, 22 November 2027 starting at 7pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.21pm