
West Somerset Local Plan - Post Examinations Hearings

Comments made on behalf of the Wyndham
Estate

Project: West Somerset Local Plan – Post Examinations Hearing Draft

Client: The Wyndham Estate

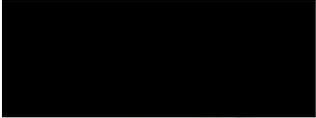
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of Response

- 1.1.1 This consultation response has been prepared by Savills on behalf of The Wyndham Estate. The response has been prepared following an invitation from West Somerset Council to comment on the proposed modifications to the West Somerset Local Plan. These modifications to the Plan have been made by the Council to address various points raised by the Planning Inspector following the Examination in Public.
- 1.1.2 This response sets out clearly and concisely the views of The Wyndham Estate in respect of the proposed main modifications.
- 1.1.3 The Wyndham Estate is a significant land and property owner in West Somerset, as well as an important employer of local people in the area. With significant land holdings on the fringes of Williton, Watchet and other settlements, the Estate has an important role to play in terms of helping to meet the housing and employment needs of the district. As such the Estate has always worked positively with West Somerset Council throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. It is hoped that this positive working relationship can continue to ensure that the Council's strategy, as set out in the Local Plan, can be delivered over the coming plan period.
- 1.1.4 In the main the Wyndham Estate is generally supportive of the proposed modifications to the Local Plan. However, **policy OC1 remains unsound in respect of proposals to convert rural buildings to residential use.**

2.0 Comments on Proposed Modifications

2.1 MM2 - Policy SC1: Hierarchy of Settlements

- 2.1.1 Previously criterion (4) of this policy set out the Council's proposed approach to development in the open countryside. In addition to being overly restrictive, this policy also duplicated policy OC1, which itself specifically deals with the issue of development in the countryside.
- 2.1.2 The Wyndham Estate therefore **supports** the removal of criterion (4) and its replacement with a

simple reference which explains that proposals for development in the open countryside will be dealt with under policy OC1.

2.2 MM8 - Policy WA1: Watchet Development

2.2.1 The Wyndham Estate **supports** the inclusion of additional wording in policy WA1 which clarifies which features of Watchet should be ‘sustained and enhanced’ by new development. This will be helpful for developers and planning officers alike when considering future development proposals at the town.

2.3 MM9 - Policy WA2: Strategic Development Allocation at Parsonage Farm, Watchet

2.3.1 The Wyndham Estate **supports** the inclusion of the additional bullet point within policy WA2, which requires any masterplan for the Parsonage Farm site to incorporate measures to prevent harm to the significance of historic assets at Parsonage Farm and their settings. This, along with the inclusion (in the supporting text) of a specific requirement to take account of the ‘Parsonage Farm Heritage Assessment’ will ensure that this matter is properly taken into account during the preparation of a masterplan for this site.

2.4 MM10 - Policy WI2: Key Strategic Development Allocations at Williton

2.4.1 The Wyndham Estate **supports** the modification to the text of policy WI2, which requires any masterplan for the Williton site allocations to incorporate enhancements to the Battlegore Barrow Cemetery and its setting for the benefit of the community. This will be achieved by preparing the masterplan in close consultation with the local community, West Somerset Council and Historic England.

2.4.2 The requirement to agree an appropriate management plan with Historic England is also considered appropriate.

2.4.3 The Wyndham Estate **supports** the decision to reinstate the land to the north of Williton as part of the strategic allocation. The inclusion of this land within the Local Plan is essential to facilitate the delivery of much needed housing over the plan period. Of course, it will also be important to safeguard and enhance the setting of the Battlegore Barrow Cemetery through the masterplanning process and this requirement is ensured through the inclusion of the additional wording in the policy.

2.5 MM12 - Policy OC1: Open Countryside Development

2.5.1 The Framework makes it very clear in paragraph 55 that residential development in isolated countryside locations should be supported where it would *'re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting'*. It does not require such schemes to be associated with employment, tourism, or work/live developments and the inclusion of such restrictions in policy OC1 is totally **unsound**. The policy must be amended before the Local Plan can be formally adopted.

2.5.2 The Wyndham Estate **supports** the inclusion of additional wording within policy OC1, which clarifies exactly which areas fall under the definition of 'open countryside'. This will help to prevent ambiguity over whether particular sites should be considered against policy SC1, which deals with sites outside settlement boundaries but closely related to built up areas, or against policy OC1, which deals specifically with countryside developments.

2.5.3 The Wyndham Estate also **supports** the inclusion of an additional bullet point which allows for development to take place in the open countryside if it will benefit an existing economic activity. This is very important when you consider how many rural businesses in West Somerset are based in open countryside locations. It is considered that policy OC1 will now support the future growth and prosperity of these businesses, which are so important to the West Somerset economy.

2.5.4 The Wyndham Estate does however consider that policy OC1 remains **unsound** because it does not conform with national planning policy with respect to proposals to convert rural buildings.

2.6 MM21 - Policy NH1x: Management of Heritage Assets (New Policy)

2.6.1 The Wyndham Estate **supports** the inclusion of policy NHx. The wording of this policy reflects national policy as set out in section 12 of the Framework.

2.7 MM26 - Policy NH11: Nationally Designated Landscape Areas (New Policy)

2.7.1 The Wyndham Estate **supports** the inclusion of policy NH11. The wording of this policy reflects national policy as set out in section 12 of the Framework.

2.8 AM10 - Policy EC6: Work/Live Developments

2.8.1 The Wyndham Estate **supports** the removal of the first bullet point of EC6, which had insisted that the employment element should make up the majority of the gross floor space of work/live units. The

removal of this requirement provides much needed flexibility within the policy, which now allows for a broader range of business activities to be based out of work/live units.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 Summary

3.1.1 In the main, the Wyndham Estate is supportive of the modifications made to the West Somerset Local Plan following the conclusion of the Examination in Public. In its modified form it is considered that the West Somerset Local Plan will help to facilitate the development that the district needs over the coming plan period, while safeguarding the cultural, historic and environmental features that make it special.

3.1.2 **However, policy OC1 remains unsound in respect of proposals to convert rural buildings to residential use and must be further modified in order to make it sound before the Local Plan can be adopted.**



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