

## **KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK LOCAL PLAN REVIEW EXAMINATION**

### **Settlement Hierarchy – Outstanding issues from Day 6 (26 March 2024)**

During the discussion on 26 March 2024 regarding AQ8, the Inspectors invited representatives of West Winch Parish Council (WWPC), North Runcton Parish Council and the Borough Council to agree a Position Statement/ Statement of Common Ground regarding the Status of West Winch in the settlement hierarchy.

The positions of the parties are explained below.

#### **West Winch Parish Council (supported by North Runcton Parish Council)**

*“West Winch Village more closely fits the criteria for a Key Rural Service centre and WWPC requests it should be designated as such. (There could be a note saying that the existing village will be obliterated by the development of the proposed growth area.)”* [[J59a - F47 Representation form](#)]

At the previous round of hearings (December 2022/ January 2023), West Winch’s position regarding the status of West Winch village in the settlement hierarchy was stated as follows:

*“The proposed amendments to the Local Plan (October 2022) re Policy LP02 Settlement Hierarchy proposes changing the designation of West Winch to become a sub-regional centre of King’s Lynn. This does not make sense. This is not what the parish wants and no consultation has taken place. West Winch is a village and residents want it to stay as such.”* [[H15 - Matter 2 West Winch PC](#)]

Following the December 2022/ January 2023 hearing sessions, the Borough Council responded to the previously stated position by WWPC by the preparation of [F47 - Topic Paper Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy \(including Neighbourhood Housing requirements\)](#). This proposed the reinstatement of Tier 3 (Settlements adjacent to King’s Lynn and the Main Towns), including West Winch village represents a continuation of the settlement hierarchy from the current Local Plan [Core Strategy Policy CS02: [F59 - Core Strategy 2011](#)]. WWPC does not support the designation of West Winch village in the current Local Plan settlement hierarchy.

WWPC seeks the redesignation of the existing village as a Key Rural Service Centre (Tier 4 settlement).

#### **Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN)**

West Winch village is designated a “Settlement adjacent to King’s Lynn and the Main Towns” in the current Local Plan (Policy CS02). Further clarification, regarding development within existing built-up areas of West Winch (i.e. the existing village) is set out in Policy E2.2 [[F58 - SADMP 2016](#)].

BCKLWN duly reconsidered the settlement hierarchy, in response to the Inspectors Letter and Note, 30 January 2023 [G19/ G20]. This culminated in the preparation of F47, which provided an update to earlier supporting evidence for the settlement hierarchy [D21; F38].

Tier 3 was considered necessary (as an additional tier), in recognition of the role of Key Rural Service Centres (Tier 4), whereby the latter provide “services and facilities help meet the day-to-day needs of their residents, but also provide services to other nearby smaller settlements”. [F47, Appendix 3, p45]. Tier 3 settlements are large villages with a range of services and facilities, but do not have a wider function in serving surrounding rural communities due to their proximity to King’s Lynn (including proposed major urban extensions, adjacent to villages such as West Winch and South Wootton.

On the basis of this analysis, it is concluded that villages such as West Winch and South Wootton are significant settlements adjoining the existing King’s Lynn urban area and/ or proposed urban extensions (including the West Winch Growth Area) are best designated Tier 3. This proposed categorisation in the settlement hierarchy considers their characteristics and spatial role.

## **Outcome**

No common ground regarding the status of West Winch village in the settlement hierarchy was reached between the parties during discussions that took place on 26 March 2024. In view of this, an action was agreed with the Planning Inspectors, whereby a position statement should be produced, explaining where the parties stand on this matter.

Feedback was received from Mr Morrish (on behalf of North Runcton Parish Council and the King’s Lynn Civic Society) and Ms Summers (on behalf of West Winch Parish Council). These comments are appended, below.

## Email from Mr Morrish (North Runcton Parish Council/ King's Lynn Civic Society, 4 April 2024

“To a large extent I feel as WWPC raised this matter they need to decide.

However, as I believe a lot of people (including the residents themselves!) often regard all the linear development along the A10 as ‘West Winch’ (even though from Hardwick roundabout up until Mill Lane it is in fact North Runcton), and as a co-author of our shared Neighbourhood Plan, I chuck in my ten penneth.

I tended to agree with the view of Alex and Tim Leader that the allocated ‘end game’ should inform the conclusion. And the allocation includes significant parcels of land on the west side of the A10. To that extent there is no easy division of ‘the village of West Winch’ and the ‘allocated growth area’. That is even before you consider significant existing parts of the ‘village’ on the east side of the A10 – not least Coronation Avenue and the 12<sup>th</sup> century church itself.

I also agree that from a ‘positive planning’ point of view, we want old and new settlement to meld to create the best urban form. (And as you know we see that as three separate, very walkable, ‘neighbourhoods’ – although, in our view – all of the ‘good bits’ that will ensure that that vision comes to reality (e.g. three sets of neighbourhood community facilities, an excellent foot and cycle path network, design distinctiveness, public transport ...) are all still ‘up in the air’ and nobody is guaranteeing any of that will be delivered...). This is a considerable source of angst for us residents. We can see the disturbance, housing and traffic coming over the horizon – but we don’t see much in the way of mitigation. Not in a timeframe that is reasonable at any rate. But that is an aside to your query.

So to me it is all about the what the implications of the tier division would be. And there were two other policies that were discussed (and I don’t think were fully resolved).

1. Is about allocations for windfall. Was the 120 ‘extra’ houses for West Winch because you had classed it as ‘Tier 4’? Does that disappear if both the existing and proposed settlement is all regarded as ‘Tier 3’ (with 2500 dwellings – up to 4000 in the fullness of time?)
2. And secondly – regarding the West Winch Policy E2.2 (which as I think you all know, I think is an extremely problematic bit of policy, which if adopted, will continue to give us all (and I certainly include Parish Cllrs) a load of headaches for the next 15 years) , how does it affect that? If all of West Winch parish was ‘Tier 3’, does the section of North Runcton outside of the allocation area remain as Tier 6? I foresee a lot of planning appeals...

Im not entirely sure that helps you.

But my short answer is – spell out all the likely implications of each choice.”

## Response from Ms Summers (West Winch Parish Council), 5 April 2024

West Winch Parish Council response to request for further comments from BCKLWN with reference to the status of West Winch Village in the settlement hierarchy, reference the position statement requested by the inspectors.

1. Since receiving the position statement from BCKLWN, asking for our comments by today, we have not had time to consult with other Parish Councillors.
2. The BCKLWN Action 6 statement states;

On the basis of this analysis, it is concluded that villages such as West Winch and South Wootton are significant settlements adjoining the existing King's Lynn urban area and/ or proposed urban extensions (including the West Winch Growth Area) are best designated Tier 3. This proposed categorisation in the settlement hierarchy considers their characteristics and spatial role.

Appendix 2 F47 Topic paper states;

Tier 1. The review concludes that West Winch village remains within Tier 3. Tier 3 is defined as Settlements adjacent to Kings Lynn and the main towns.

It does not say and/ or proposed urban extensions (including the West Winch Growth Area).

Is it proposed to change the wording?

3. West Winch appears in Table 2 Housing Requirements to 2039 by Designated Neighbourhood Areas.

The table states that column d = a plus b plus c

The final column Housing Requirement (HR) = d minus a minus b

This appears to leave c as the answer rendering the rest of the table irrelevant as HR always equals c.

We request clarification of the meaning of this table in its present form as all it seems to need is column C.

4. Column c is windfall requirements.

Para 36 -41 explain that the windfall calculation is based entirely on how many households already in an area. So the more housing already in an area, the more will be allowed irrespective of any other characteristics.

This would not seem to meet the NPPF requirement for objectively assessed need or for local allocations to reflect the planning strategy of the local planning authority.

5. It is not clear which geographical area "West Winch" (designated neighbourhood area) in the table refers to.

Neighbourhood plans are referenced Para 42 -47.

West Winch does not have a stand-alone neighbourhood plan.

The West Winch and North Runcton Neighbourhood Plan encompasses the Growth Area and the village of North Runcton as well as the village of West Winch.

6. North Runcton Parish Council have asked for further clarification on the implications of the tier division and placement within it and we are asking the same and clarification of the above points.