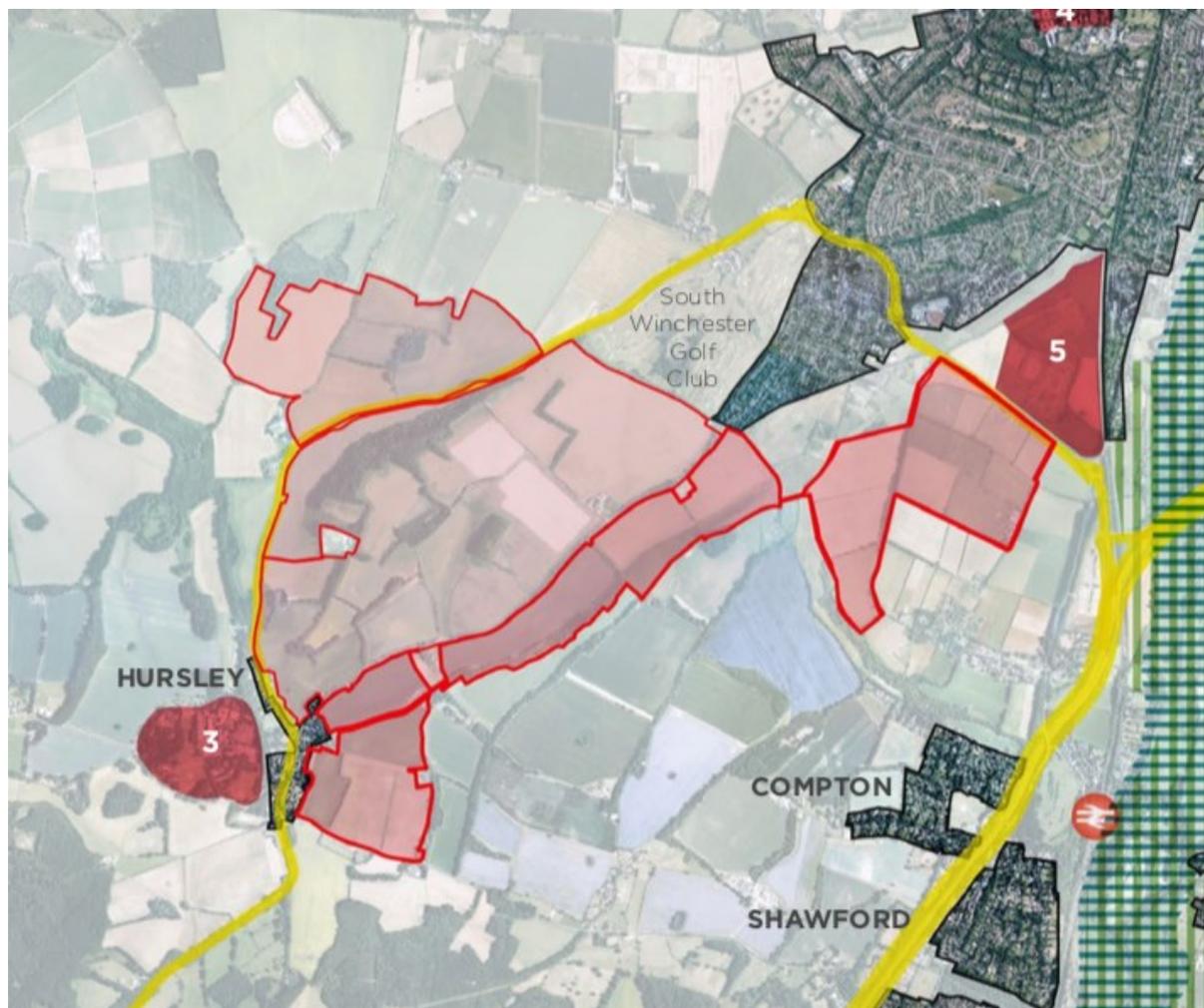


Winchester City Councillors District Report January 2021

What is RoyalDown?

RoyalDown is a proposal from a private developer for 5,000 homes between OB and Hursley. It is simply a proposal: the developers have announced their intent, currently there is no planning application in principle or in outline. They have produced a brochure (click here for their brochure) that puts forward their vision for 5,000 homes, a primary school, secondary school, a community centre, a healthcare facility, solar farms, battery storage and over 2000 park and ride spaces. The area they are intending to build on is shown below:



Your local ward councillors are working with Parish Councils and residents. We need to make sure that we have names and contact details of those residents that are opposed to this site and want to fight it when the time is ready. As it is not officially a planning application it cannot be fought directly to Winchester City Council. But everyone can contribute to the consultations on Winchester Local Plan as it is developed in January / February,

Why is Winchester being asked to build so many new homes?

As you may be aware there is a national need for new homes to address the current housing crisis. The Conservative government has put in place housing targets for each District and Borough in the UK. Recently the Government had two consultations :

1. The first consultation paper was on **Changes to the current planning system**, mainly around housing numbers and formulae on affordability which are punitive to Winchester and arrive at a 50% increase in housing numbers from that expected. The government has since redrawn its numbers and SE England is no longer targeted as it was before.

2. The second consultation paper was a government **White Paper on Planning for the Future** <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>
The White Paper proposed significant reforms to many aspects of the planning system, including a change in the way in which land is allocated for development, the type of policies which can be included in Local Plans and how controls over that development are implemented through development management. The means of delivering infrastructure via new development (s106 agreements – planning obligations) and Community Infrastructure Levy would also be changed. The new style of plan will look and feel very different to the current style as it will have digital and interactive format and the identification of land for development will follow a zoning approach based on three designations; **growth, renewal and protected areas**. This consultation period ended on the 29th October 2020, and WCC along with many Parish Councils submitted robust responses.

How many new homes is Winchester expected to build? And can I be part of the discussion?

Unfortunately, the Government has still not confirmed the housing numbers for each county and WCC have decided to issue a Strategic Issues and Priorities (StrIP) paper in January for consultation in Feb/March. Winchester City Council hopes to host a Parish Council briefing before the consultation starts so there will be an opportunity for questions at that meeting and it will give the community time to respond to the consultation.

This StrIP paper will not discuss housing figures but concentrate on use of brownfield, blue and green infrastructure, low carbon lifestyles etc. It will not consider individual land submissions.

Once we have that outcome, (or possible even while we do that exercise) we can discuss with Parish Councils the relevance of any land that has been put forward by a developer: does it fit into the Issues and Priorities that the residents have identified?

What can I do to stop this proposed development?

There is no planning application or approval in principle - or anything else that needs comment from local residents or the Parish Council - so there is nothing that you can officially object to. However, long term, we would like to see more people getting involved with the Local Plan Process, so we are asking residents to sign upon the WCC website for 'keep me posted'.

City council progresses with Upper Brook Street GP surgery

Plans for a new medical centre in the heart of the city have been moved forward; the council's Cabinet approved the development of the Upper Brook Street car park by specialist primary healthcare developer, Assura plc.

Since February this year, the council has worked with key stakeholders including, St Clements GP Practice and West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to find the most suitable way of delivering a new building.

Operation Transmission preparations

Preparations to ensure the road network in Hampshire and beyond flows as well as possible after the EU Exit are now complete.

Operation Transmission – the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) plan – is fully resourced and ready to start with critical signage for hauliers at the roadside having been installed and ready to unveil on 1 January 2021.

This follows months of planning by local agencies, based on a 'worst case' scenario shared by Government. All possible options were looked at to mitigate the possibility of lorries backing up from Portsmouth International Port onto the road network, as a result of changes to EU export paperwork.

The only viable option, identified by the LRF, was to introduce short stay triage points where the border readiness of lorries could be checked – a primary one on the route to Portsmouth at the A31 outside Winchester and another at Tipner. All other options were discounted as they did not provide adequate mitigation. The final decision took into account how busy roads were on a typical day.

Whilst a deal has been agreed between the UK and EU relating to trade, changes to the paperwork required to be produced by hauliers for border readiness remain. Operation Transmission will therefore still be necessary to assist the flow of traffic on Hampshire's strategic road network.

Extensive consultation has been carried out with freight hauliers, with clear information provided about the impact of arriving in Portsmouth and not being border ready. Planning has also involved implementing speed restrictions at two locations (details of locations provided in notes to editors below). These are not to do with traffic flow. They are required to ensure the safety of those who are working at the roadside as part of the plans.

When will we know if the plan is working?

Portsmouth International Port requires lorries to book well in advance. This means the LRF has demand data for the first few days of the New Year. It shows the first three days are likely to be quieter than peak demand. This will then build to 'normal' day demand. The reasons for the first days being quieter include non-working days, the impact of COVID-19 on road movements (including school traffic), possible stockpiling of goods, and some hauliers choosing to wait and see what happens.

- Op Transmission will commence on 1 January from 8am. This will give hauliers and those operating the triage points the opportunity to familiarise themselves as the plans bed in, and enable a live time assessment of how everything at the Port and beyond is working.
- Demand then starts to increase from the week of Monday 4 January. Regular updates to media will be published during this period.

Council invites feedback on budget plans

Each year, all local authorities are required to publish a budget setting out how they will fund services. Whilst Winchester City Council set a 'fully funded' budget in February 2020¹, the impact of COVID-19 has seen significant additional costs as well as dramatic losses of income.

Whilst the council's priorities set out in the April 2020 Council Plan remain unchanged², the direct result of the impacts of the pandemic mean that they are forecasting a shortfall on next year's budget of £3.7m.

On 16 December, the council's Cabinet considered proposals for achieving a balanced budget for 2021/2022 and the council will consider and set the budget in February 2021.

The council is inviting local residents and businesses to comment on the proposals. A link to this consultation can be found here: <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/about/financial-documents/budget-consultation>