

The City of Winchester Trust
32, Upper Brook Street, Winchester SO23 8DG
9th April 2009



Dear Councillor

**Adoption of Winchester Local Development Framework (LDF)
Provisions for Bushfield Camp & Barton Farm, Winchester**

The Trust is aware that members will have to consider many difficult issues when deciding to adopt the Development Framework at Council on 22 April 2009. Amongst these are **two issues** to which the Trust urge members give their special consideration and support.

1. Bushfield Camp Policy WT3 (CAB1823LD)

There has long been an aspiration by owners and would-be developers to make use of this greenfield site, giving rise to the supposition that it is therefore suitable for development of some kind. Having abandoned the idea of sports use, the City Council is now proposing that it should have a commercial function. On two grounds the Trust believes this to be mistaken.

- (i) On the evidence that has been made available, the Trust sees no justification for allocating any part of this site for a 'science/knowledge park in conjunction with other use'. The need for, or the promotion of, industrial use has not been demonstrated. Moreover this location would appear to encourage in-commuting from the south, without any evidence that it would reduce outward commuting from Winchester.
- (ii) This is a site that makes a **nationally important contribution to the landscape setting of south Winchester, the river valley, the Church and Hospital of St Cross, views from St Catherine's Hill and the South Downs National Park**. The City Council's study of 'Bushfield Camp and its Surroundings' (December 1977) describes the site of the old army camp (apart from a small area of sports field) as "moderately visible/sensitive". Considering the unique importance of the views into the site from across the valley this description should still have meant that built development would be visible and harmful. The attached photographs show that the Bushfield Camp area is clearly, rather than moderately, visible from the other side of the valley, **meaning that buildings on this site would be very obtrusive**. We hope you will agree that it would be a serious and irretrievable mistake to harm these views that have been so successfully protected in the past.

It should also be noted that the old camp site is designated as a SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation).

The Trust urges members to make no provision in the LDF for development at Bushfield Camp on the grounds of its national landscape importance, and because the need for a science park is not proven; should it become so after the proposed investigation, we urge that a different and less sensitive site be found.

2. Barton Farm Policies S22 and WT2 (CAB1823LD)

Whilst the Trust has never favoured development of Barton Farm, it acknowledges that government requirements and planning commitments made in the past allocating this site for development would be extremely difficult to reverse, and may well have to be honoured. However, the implementation of this allocation should be subject to three clear requirements that should be included in the wording of the LDF.

- (i) Release of this site for development should only be permitted when there is **conclusive evidence** at both regional and local planning level that this site has to be made available to meet a demand for housing in Winchester, because no other allocated sites or unimplemented permissions exist. The present recession makes this proviso more important than ever; the allocation should therefore retain its **reserve status**.
- (ii) If the City Council is satisfied of the need to develop this site, a **masterplan** should be commissioned by the City Council (not the developer alone), which is not only supported by a detailed site analysis of the site and its context but also **embodies a high degree of design skill** for which consultants with architectural as well as urban design experience are normally essential. The plan should be based on respected principles of urban and landscape design and impact. The Trust would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the brief and consultation process. The masterplan should include two additional elements:
 - Proposals for traffic and other infrastructure problems beyond the site boundary for agreement with the authorities **prior to planning approval**.
 - Examination of opportunities for development of the land east of the railway, proposed for 'green infrastructure' by WCC, to allow the open and extensive landscape to the north of the ridge line on the 65 metre contour (the line of the existing footpath) to be retained in agricultural use.The adoption of the masterplan should be subject to public consultation.
- (iii) That **safeguards** are clearly included in the LDF, to ensure that the development of this site, should it be required, is carried out in accordance with the adopted masterplan by all parties seeking to obtain planning permission to carry out the development of the site in part or in full, for all phases.

The Trust respectfully hopes that you understand and appreciate our concerns, and will support and promote our proposals on these two important issues.

Yours sincerely,

Chairman, City of Winchester Trust