



City of Winchester Trust representation to LDF Cabinet Committee 25th March 2009

Your officers and local councillors know that the Trust is as close as Winchester gets to an independent think-tank. We debate issues carefully and at great length, and reach balanced and rational conclusions. We do not subscribe to nimbyism, our remit is the good of Winchester, its character and its setting, especially for future generations. When endeavouring to protect Winchester you and we are caretakers, not nimbys. We don't underrate the great difficulties of your task but we do ask you to take heed of what we have to say.

Barton Farm

The Trust has never supported use of this site, but recognises that a commitment has been in place for over 10 years and cannot realistically be abandoned now. Nevertheless, anyone who does a walkabout here realises that to build on these beautiful, sweeping acres would be criminal unless it is essential, and then only if the development is something Winchester will be proud of, now and in the future.

Consequently we ask 3 things of you (largely covered but by way of emphasis):

- 1) that the LDF is unequivocal about the reserve status of the site so that Barton Farm will not be built on unless and until the government's requirements cannot be met by any other means and then only as a full 2000 house sustainable community.
- 2) that the quality of urban planning, landscape and architecture is of outstanding (Winchester-worthy) quality. This cannot be done by leaving the brief and masterplan in the hands of developers: the LDF must include the requirement for a city brief and a masterplan by independent experts.
- 3) that planning approval should not be given without detailed plans of how transport and other matters are to be handled.

If, as presently written, these things are left to be dealt with when the time comes, your obvious good intent will be watered down by expediency. You have all seen this happen before.

Bushfield

This case is quite different. There is nothing even remotely essential about development at Bushfield. The Spatial Strategy refers to the proposal for a "**knowledge park**" (don't be beguiled – this means an up-market industrial estate) as an "**economic opportunity**" – in other words, a speculative development. The strategy document acknowledges that the need and implications have not yet been investigated or demonstrated and until they are, no location should be specified, let alone Bushfield.

For, make no mistake, Bushfield is a uniquely important landscape of national, even international importance. Anyone who has not looked across the valley, and the exquisite buildings of St Cross Hospital, from the eastern hills is not qualified to have an opinion on the matter.

The campsite was a temporary military use of part of Bushfield Down. The army left a long time ago – it is all Bushfield Down again now and nearly half of it is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, including the old campsite.

The City's own landscape assessment ('97) describes the proposed development area as "***moderately visible and sensitive***" – that means visible (it is as if one were to say someone was a moderate vandal, or even moderately pregnant!). A temporary army camp in time of war is one thing; for the City Council to encourage a speculative development that would compromise the view from across the valley forever, would be vandalism, and posterity would hold you responsible.

We beg of you, don't let it happen, don't be vandals.

PTO

Conceptual Framework

And one last thing - we have spoken many times before to the Leader and others about becoming proactive and commissioning a **conceptual framework** for the future of the whole City and its setting, instead of continually having to respond to government demands that are clearly ignorant of Winchester's special circumstances. Is there any way in which this could become a commitment in the LDF?