

## **SPECIAL MEETING OF PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**14 June 2010**

**Attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Johnston (Chairman) (P)

Barratt (P)  
Evans (P)  
Fall (P)  
Pearce

Huxstep (P)  
Jeffs (P)  
Lipscomb (P)  
Tait (P)

**Deputy Members:**

Councillor Mitchell (Standing Deputy for Councillor Pearce)

**Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:**

Councillors Wood, Berry and Learney

**Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:**

Councillors Bell and Jackson

---

1. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman welcomed approximately 80 members of the public to this Special Meeting of the Committee, held at the United Church, Jewry Street, Winchester to consider applications relating to the development of Barton Farm, Winchester. He explained that, due to the importance of these applications, he had agreed to extend the usual public speaking arrangements to enable more people to speak for longer. A summary of their comments is set out below.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:**

That, as the Vice-Chairman of the Committee (Councillor Pearce) had sent his apologies for this meeting, Councillor Mitchell be appointed as Vice-Chairman for this meeting only.

3. **WINCHESTER NORTH MAJOR DEVELOPMENT AREA (BARTON FARM)**  
**(09/02412/OUT AND 10/01063/OUT)**  
[\(Report PDC857 refers\)](#)

Councillor Lipscomb declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of this Report as he was a member of the Council of the City of Winchester Trust, which had commented on the application. However, Councillor Lipscomb had taken no part in the Trust's deliberations and therefore spoke and voted thereon.

Prior to the public meeting, the Committee and Ward Members had informally visited the application site and viewed it from points along the Andover Road, along the main ridgeline and from within the site. The site was also viewed from points along Wellhouse Lane, from Down Farm Lane to the north of the site and from Courtenay Road to the west.

At the commencement of the meeting, the Head of Legal Services explained the background to the applications. The Report asked the Committee to consider two identical outline applications for the development of Barton Farm. The applicant had appealed against the Council's non-determination of 09/02412/OUT, and this was due to be heard by a Planning Inspector at Public Inquiry on 7 September 2010. Therefore, the Committee was being asked to set out how it would have determined the application had it come to them within the statutory deadline and the Report set out the officers' recommended reasons for refusal, on which the Council's case at the Inquiry would be based. The Head of Legal Services added that it was for the planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to consider and report on issues in the appeal, including the implications of the letter from the new Secretary of State for Community and Local Government, Eric Pickles (Appendix 7 of the Report).

The second, duplicate, application (10/01063/OUT) had been submitted by the applicant to provide the Committee with an opportunity to approve the application, if they so wished, and therefore allow the application to be dealt with without having to proceed with the Appeal process. The Head of Legal Services recommended that, in accordance with Section 70B of the Town and County Planning Act 1990, the Committee should formally decline to determine this application as the Condition in Section 70B(3) of the Act had been fulfilled and it could be considered that it would not be in the public interest for a second application to be determined at this time.

The Head of Planning Management introduced the application to the Committee. He explained that the application proposed the redevelopment of 93.1 hectares of land north of Winchester for 2,000 dwellings. The site was subdivided by a ridgeline of trees and the applicant effectively proposed to divert traffic from Andover Road through the site; create a small Park and Ride facility for 200 vehicles and establish a new public right of way through the site to the Worthies, via the existing railway underpass.

He referred Members to the update sheet supplied at the meeting which, in summary, proposed an amendment to Recommendation B (as set out below); set out latest position in regard to the Appeal, details under the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010; additional comments from Bovis Homes, Heron Land Development, Keith Taylor MEP, First Wessex Housing Group, the Council for the Protection of Rural England, WinACC and, on behalf of the applicant, a letter from RPS (Applicant's Agent) to the Planning Inspectorate and the Head of Planning Management's reply .

The Head of Strategic Planning summarised the relevant planning policies that related to the applications, as set out on page 29 of the Report. In summary, the Council's saved policies from the Local Plan had identified Barton Farm as a strategic reserve site, but this would only be released if there was a "compelling justification" to ensure an adequate supply of land to meet the required housing numbers. The saved Local Plan was in the process of being replaced by the Council's Local Development Framework, which was currently at the preferred options stage. However, this too had identified Barton Farm as the area of strategic allocation in the non-PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) part of the District; but again would only be released if there was a compelling justification to meet the required housing numbers.

However, the housing numbers allocations had been set by the South East Plan, and it was this that the new Secretary of State had indicated an intention to abolish (Appendix 7 refers). At this present time, the Council had no alternative basis for assessing housing needs in the District and therefore the Head of Strategic Planning could not advise (if the numbers in the South East Plan were to be discounted) whether there was the "compelling justification" which was required by the relevant policies before the site could be released. Furthermore, the Council had originally opposed the housing numbers set out in the South East Plan. It was for these reasons that officers recommended Reason 1 for refusal.

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Legal Services explained that the Committee should take account of all current material planning considerations, and that this included the Secretary of State's letter.

The Committee then heard from Mr Jenkins (Team Leader, Highways Development Planning, Hampshire County Council) who explained that, whilst many of the officers' concerns about transport issues had been addressed by the applicant, there remained significant issues which formed the basis of his recommendation to refuse (pages 41-42 of the Report and Reasons 2-6 refer). In summary, these related to the unknown impact of the development on Stockbridge Road and Andover Road, concerns about its layout and operation; detailed concerns regarding the junction onto Andover Road; the phasing of the development and the developer's contribution to passenger transport. However, Mr Jenkins explained that all of these reasons for refusal could be overcome through further work with the applicant and a satisfactory Section 106 Legal Agreement.

The City Council's Urban Design and Major Projects Officer addressed the Committee on the applicant's masterplan. He explained how it had been

drafted in partnership with officers, stakeholders and consultees; it addressed the proposed design principles; areas of open space; indicative building heights; the proposed combined heat and power centre (with 19 metre chimney); the distribution of housing densities across the site (the average density was 38.5 dwellings per hectare); the greening of Andover Road and the planting of mature trees along the new main road. As a consequence, he had raised no objection to the applications in relation to urban design.

However, he reported that CABA (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) had raised concerns regarding the proposed access strategy. They had suggested that the downgrading of Andover Road (a Roman Road) was inappropriate and that the applicant should attempt to provide a frontage onto the existing road as a means of drawing Barton Farm and Harestock together. In response, the applicant had argued that CABA had failed to appreciate the scale of the changes proposed for the access arrangements and that significant development along Andover Road would be out of character with existing properties, and would require the felling of a number of mature trees.

The Landscape Architect described to the Committee the current landscape of the area and explained that site assessments had demonstrated that Barton Farm was the least sensitive in landscape terms, in comparison with other potential strategic sites. She added that well designed developments could bring significant long term landscape benefits to an area and that this was reflected in the applicant's vision statement. The applications re-enforced Winchester's image as a green city, with the retention of the tree cover along the ridgeline and she therefore raised no objection to the applications with regard to landscape issues.

Mrs Halpin (Ecological advisor for Hampshire County Council) explained that assessments had demonstrated that the area of Barton Farm had a low ecological value, following years of intensive farming. It was therefore important that the hedgerows were to be retained as these were the habitats of most of the site's species. Furthermore, through a satisfactory Section 106 Legal Agreement, it was possible that the new development could result in a net gain through new planting. She also explained that the development of the site was unlikely to have a significant impact on the nearby River Itchen or the SSSI area (as it provided on-site recreation space). Therefore, she had raised no objection to the application.

The City Council's Open Space Project Officer explained that the Council's open space requirements had been exceeded by the applicant, who proposed to provide 23 hectares of open space (as opposed to the 18 required), through allotments, children's play areas, informal green space, natural green space, parks and sports fields and recreation grounds.

During the public participation section of the meeting, the following members of the public spoke against the application. A summary of their comments is set out below:

Mr Kingdom commented on what he considered to be successful town expansions and that Winchester's suburbs had failed to relate to each other. He also commented on the lack of sufficient infrastructure to support the development and advised that the new residents would be equally reliant as existing residents on the private car as their mode of transport.

Mr Cooper objected to the loss of good quality arable land at a time when self-sufficiency should be supported. He stated that the proposals would not remove the traffic bottleneck at the Andover Road traffic lights; that the development would generate a greater need for key workers (which would not be offset by the MDA's, major development area's, affordable housing); that the children of new residents were likely to want to remain in Winchester, thus exacerbating the area's housing problems; flooding concerns and the need to retain Winchester's green setting.

Mr Worrall highlighted the 598 objections received by the Council against the applications and the 5,000 that signed the Save Barton Farm petition. He contrasted these against the four letters that had been received in support. He explained that the size of the development was "off the scale" at one-sixth of the total size of the existing town and that, if released for development, Winchester would be blighted for hundreds of years.

Mr Sealey spoke against the proposed diversion of Andover Road through the MDA, as it was likely to create more pollution and danger and did not relate to the junction with Bereweke Road, which was already the subject of increased traffic. He recommended that Winchester provided the new housing it required through the development of small, infill sites.

Mr Percy (Headbourne Worthy Parish Council) outlined the Parish Council's objection to the applications. They questioned the need for such a large scale development and commented that the density was not compatible with the town; that the construction process would cause many years of disruption; that it would erode the gap between the town and surrounding villages; that there was insufficient infrastructure to support the MDA; and that the re-routeing of Andover Road would have an adverse traffic effect on Headbourne Worthy (especially with regard to heavy goods vehicles, HGVs).

Mr Gordon (Kings Worthy Parish Council) spoke in objection to the scheme. He opposed the proposal to divert traffic through the MDA as Andover Road was used as an emergency diversion for nearby major trunk roads; the possibility that existing roads in Headbourne Worthy and Kings Worthy would be used as rat-runs to access the motorway and Tesco's; that the proposed small Park and Ride would not be viable; insufficient account had been taken of flooding and the effects of water run offs into Headbourne Worthy and Kings Worthy and that there was insufficient capacity in the existing infrastructure (especially at secondary school level).

Mr Hickman (Littleton and Harestock Parish Council) spoke against the applications. He commented on the need for the MDA; the possibility that more appropriate sites could become available; that the proposals lacked

imagination and appeared generic and that the proposed phasing the development was ill-thought out.

Mrs Peal (South Wonston Parish Council) spoke against the applications. She commented on the scale of the development; against the diverted road (as it would create a barrier dividing the MDA in just the same way as Andover Road would divide the new development from Harestock); that the level of traffic likely to be generated was impossible to predict, but was likely to have an adverse impact on the Three Maids Hill junction; that it would result in loss of good agricultural land and effect Winchester's carbon footprint.

Mr Ashe spoke against the applications as representative of a local amenity group, Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC). He stated that WinACC opposed in principle any extension of Winchester, as it would increase the town's carbon footprint. However, he requested that if the Committee was minded to approve the application, it should ensure that it was built to the highest sustainable standards, which he did not consider the current proposals were ambitious enough to meet.

Mr Cherrett (Winchester City Residents' Association) spoke against the applications. In his introductory remarks, Mr Cherrett paid tribute to Mr Weeks (the Association's late Vice Chairman) who had sadly passed away earlier in 2010 and who had made many representations to the Council regarding Barton Farm.

Mr Cherrett questioned whether the compelling justification had been met in the light of new Government policies; that Barton Farm was seen as an important aspect in the "Winchester City and its Setting" Study and the importance of open countryside to existing residents' quality of life; the inappropriate scale of the development (which was equivalent to the earlier developments of Weeke, Badger Farm and Teg Down combined); the likelihood that it would produce 12,000 traffic movements each day; that there was no reason to assume that most of the new occupiers would not be commuters; that the diverted road scheme would have a negative impact upon other roads in Winchester (especially Chilbolton Avenue); the loss of agricultural land; flooding issues; the lack of infrastructure (especially schools) and the level of public opposition to scheme.

Mrs Slattery (Council for the Protection of Rural England, CPRE) spoke against the applications. She commented that the applications were premature as the SHLAA and annual housing monitoring studies required review and that the proposals were contrary to the Local Plan and National Planning policies. She also stated that the increased pressures of climate change, flooding, the need to protect green areas and the economy (in which tourism and agriculture had become increasingly important) further justified the reasons for refusal.

Mrs Gosling (Save Barton Farm Group) spoke against the applications. She explained the Group's 13-year campaign against the development of Barton Farm and that it carried the support of 5,000 local residents. She commented that the MDA was premature and unwanted; would result in the loss of good

farmland; destroy the landscape setting; generate traffic, flooding and give rise to sewerage problems.

Councillor Wood (Ward Member for Sparsholt) spoke against the applications. In summary he stated that that MDA would produce traffic gridlock in Winchester and raised concerns as to how this would affect emergency vehicles. He therefore suggested that the diversion of a major road through the MDA was inappropriate and that this should be included in the reasons for refusal. He also raised concerns regarding the phasing of the development, questioned the need for the site to be released, and that the Council should seek to address its affordable housing need through the re-development of brownfield sites. He also explained that, given the importance of the development, removal of refusal reasons should not be delegated to officers.

Councillor Berry (a Ward Member for St Barnabas) spoke against the applications. In summary, she stated that the large scale of the development was old fashioned in its approach and did not reflect the diversity of development required in Winchester. In addition to commenting on climate change, food production and the opposition from Mountbatten Court residents to the development, Councillor Berry explained that the experiences of the recent Waitrose development had demonstrated the lack of spare capacity in Winchester's infrastructure.

Councillor Learney (a Ward Member for Littleton and Harestock) spoke against the applications. In summary, she reminded the Committee that, given the change in Government policy, the housing need had not yet been quantified and therefore the need to release the site not justified. To that end, she explained that the Council would be working on reviewing the Vision for Winchester document and welcomed public involvement in that process. Although she also commented on the merits of the application, she stated that the sustainability issues and travel plan issues were insufficient and that new primary school places would be required at an early stage of major development of the site.

County Councillor Porter spoke against the applications as the member for the Itchen Valley County Electoral Division. In summary, she commented on the need for education places arising from the MDA; that the Park and Ride site was too small to be viable; traffic issues (including the effect of large loads travelling through the site); flooding; the lack of a church within the masterplan and that a strategic development of this size would be better located at Basingstoke.

County Councillor Dickens (as the member for the Westgate County Electoral Division as above please) spoke against the applications. She commented that there was no justification to release the site and raised issues regarding traffic and flooding.

Mr Brine (Member of Parliament for Winchester and Chandlers Ford) spoke against the applications. In summary, he commented on the level of public opposition to the scheme, that the Secretary of State's letter was a material consideration and that he had given Mr Brine a clear assurance of the

Government's intention to introduce changes which would allow Local Authorities to set their own housing numbers. Furthermore, he commented that the application would amount to an overdevelopment of Winchester and do nothing to improve the town as a place to live.

Mr Clements (RPS, agents acting on behalf of the applicant) spoke in support of the applications. In summary, he explained the applicant's long term involvement with the site. Each comprehensive assessment of the area had concluded that Barton Farm was the most sustainable site suitable for large scale development. He regretted the recommendation to refuse on the basis of a two paragraph letter from the Secretary of State, as it could disregard months of hard work with officers to create a good masterplan. He added that the letter provided local decision makers with no practical advice and, whilst it was a material consideration, the amount of weight placed on it was a matter for each authority.

He continued that the letter did not remove the real need there was in Winchester for additional housing and affordable housing. Indeed, at a previous appeal, the Secretary of State had criticised Winchester's shortfall in affordable housing. Winchester currently had a need for an average of 440 new affordable dwellings each year and releasing Barton Farm would effectively guarantee an additional 200 dwellings each year for the next ten years, relieving pressure from other greenfield sites and garden developments.

Mr Clement agreed that there were still outstanding issues regarding the application, but that these could be resolved through negotiation and planning conditions. With regard to 10/01063/OUT, he spoke against the officer's recommendation to not determine this application as an abdication of the Council's responsibility.

Finally, Mr Clements stated that if the Committee refused the application as set out, the Council had a responsibility to demonstrate what its alternative would be to meet the District's real housing need.

During Councillors' questions, the Committee noted that the recent small changes to PPS3 (on garden land and density) did not directly affect these applications, but could have an affect on alternative schemes.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing Strategy and Development explained that there were 3,000 people on the housing waiting list and that this was likely to increase, year-on-year, as the situation was worsened by the slow down in the number of houses built and the decline in affordability. Furthermore, the Council was dealing with approximately 100 homeless applications, which was the highest number for many years. If approved, Barton Farm would provide 800 affordable units comprising a mixture of housing and tenure types. However, the Head of Legal Services confirmed that the Committee should not look to these applications to purely solve the District's housing issues, but consider them against all material considerations.



A Member raised concerns about the MDA's ability to integrate well with the existing areas and officers replied that the outline applications had demonstrated that the MDA could be well connected, with both the town centre and countryside and that it was likely that the town centre facilities would welcome increased patronage.

In response to Members' concerns regarding highways issues, Mr Jenkins explained that the proposed diversion had been fully assessed and that the new road would be wide enough to cater for HGVs. He also confirmed that the emergency service operators had been consulted on the proposals and had raised no objection.

With regard to sustainability issues, Mr Stuart (Consultant to the Council advising on the sustainability of the development) explained that the applications satisfied current policies and that, once the combined heat and power plant was fully operational, the MDA would be 70% energy self sufficient. At that stage, the MDA would comply with Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The Committee also considered the flooding issues which had been raised during public participation. In response, the Drainage Engineer explained that, from information provided by the Environment Agency, a 20 metre wide corridor of land, which was liable to flooding, would be preserved as open space.

In relation to paragraph 10.146 of the Report, the Scientific Officer confirmed that there would be small number of properties built in an area where the levels of noise would generally be considered to be unacceptable, given the Government guidance set out in PPG24. However, this had to be balanced against benefits arising from the road diversion and taken in the context of the small number of dwellings that would be affected.

In response to concerns regarding education provision, Mr Lawson (School Organisation Officer, Hampshire County Council) estimated that the MDA would have 527 pupils and therefore required a two-form entry primary school. However, given the existing shortage of primary school places, the County was seeking a site large enough to accommodate a three-form entry primary school and would look within their own budgets to make up the financial shortfall. He added that the County Council would look to have the primary school operational at the earliest practical phase of the development.

Mr Lawson also advised that the County Council was still in negotiations with the applicant regarding the provision of secondary school places.

Arising from this discussion, the Corporate Director (Operations) confirmed that large scale developments, such as these applications, often provided local authorities with a better opportunity to realise the developer contributions for infrastructure items (that offset the effect of new developments), rather than a collection of smaller (or no) contributions from smaller development sites.

During debate, a Member spoke in support of the applications on the basis of the quality of the applications and as a means to meet existing housing need.

At the conclusion of debate, whilst Members commented on the quality of the application, they agreed with the recommendations in the Report that had an appeal for non-determination not been lodged application 09/02412/OUT would have been refused and that 10/01063/OUT should be not determined for the reasons set out below. Members had concluded that the compelling justification to release the site had not been proven, especially in the light of the Secretary of State's letter. Furthermore, Members agreed with the concerns expressed regarding highways issues.

In respect of Recommendations 2 and 3 (page 69 of the Report), the Committee agreed that this should be amended to include "...in consultation with the Chairman *and Vice-Chairman* of the Planning Development Control Committee.." to better reflect the magnitude of the application.

#### RESOLVED:

##### **That in respect of Application 09/02412/OUT:**

1. That had an appeal for non-determination not been lodged by Cala Homes (South) Ltd on 19th April 2010 then Winchester City Council would have refused Planning Permission for the development of 84 ha at Barton Farm, Winchester for the following reasons:

- i. That having regard to its consistent position on the appropriate level of housing numbers for the non PUSH area of Winchester district and the advice that it is able to determine the application without the framework of regional numbers and plans the Council is not satisfied that the local need for housing amounts to the compelling justification needed to justify the release of this reserve site.
- ii. It has not been demonstrated that the local road network is capable of operating satisfactorily with the additional traffic likely to be generated by the site proposals, particularly along the proposed and existing Andover Road corridor including its junctions with Harestock Road, Well House Lane, Stoney Lane and City Road and also along the existing Stockbridge Road corridor particularly at its junctions with Harestock Road, Stoney Lane and Bereweeke Road and on those parts of the network to the east of the site particularly Park Road and its junction with Worthy Lane and at the A33 junction with the B3047. Consequently the development proposals will have a significant impact to the detriment of the highway network which is contrary to policies T2 of the adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review and CC7 of the South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East.

iii. The junction of Andover Road / Harestock Road / Well House Lane is unsuitable in its present condition to take the type and amount of traffic likely to be generated by the first phase of the proposal. Consequently the development proposals will have a significant impact to the detriment of the highway network which is contrary to policies T2 of the adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review and CC7 of the South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East.

iv. The design of the proposed New Andover Road is unsuitable in its present condition to safely and satisfactorily accommodate the type and amount of multi-modal traffic likely to be generated by the proposal and using that route to access the City Centre. Consequently the development proposals will have a significant impact to the detriment of the highway network which is contrary to policies T2 of the adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review and CC7 of the South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East.

v. The proposal involves development that cannot be reconciled with national planning policy guidance in PPG13 in that it fails to make the best possible use of opportunities to reduce reliance on the private car. The failure to utilise alternative means of transport to the private car would result in an unacceptable increase in the number and length of car journeys to the detriment of the environment and the locality. The proposal therefore conflicts with the objectives of PPG13 and PPS4 and policies T1 and T2 of the South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East and does not comply with saved policies T1, T3 and T5 of the adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review.

vi. It has not been demonstrated that the strategic road network is capable of operating satisfactorily with the additional traffic likely to be generated by the site proposals, particularly in relation to J9 of the M3. Consequently the development proposals will have a significant impact to the detriment of the highway network which is contrary to policies T2 of the adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review and CC7 of the South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East.

vii. The development is unacceptable as an appropriate agreement has not been secured for the adequate and timely provision of the necessary social, community, cultural, physical and environmental infrastructure required in association with the development relating to: affordable housing; open space provision; primary education; secondary education; early years education; healthcare; community facilities, cultural facilities, ecological mitigation, sustainable drainage and renewable energy. The development is therefore contrary to policies DP9, RT4, CE.8, CE9, CE11 and MDA.2 of the adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review and policy NRM 11 of the South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East.

viii. The proposed development is contrary to Policy HE.1 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review in that it fails to make satisfactory

provision for a programme of archaeological investigation and recording before or during development, on a site which is considered to be of archaeological interest.

2. That delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director (Operations), in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee, to enter into any necessary Section 106 Agreements or Unilateral Undertaking in respect of securing the appropriate social, physical and community infrastructure on the site.

3. That delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director (Operations), in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee, to negotiate the removal of reasons for refusal from the application if the necessary information is supplied in full by the applicant prior to the Section 78 Inquiry.

**That in respect of Application 10/01063/OUT:**

That, in accordance with Section 70B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Council formally declines to determine the duplication planning application ref: 10/01063/OUT because the condition in Section 70B (3) is fulfilled and it is not in the public interest for a second application to be determined at this time.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 5.30pm

Chairman