

FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN Part 3

The Welborne Plan

Notice of Proposed Modifications

Introduction

This response deals only with the Main Modifications raised by the Inspector.

The Inspector has raised 22 Main Modifications as a result of his review of the Welborne Plan. This must indicate that Fareham Council has some way to go before the plan can be seen as “sound”. This could also be viewed as an indicator that the Council needs help in developing a satisfactory plan for this large and complex project that has raised several serious issues, in my view, yet to be solved.

My lack of confidence causes me to urge that the Inspector looks at the plan as a whole again and considers the viability, scope and delivery capability of this project.

Summary

The difficulty is to try to follow the correct process and avoid raising challenges which the inspector may see as repeats of previous concerns. However, what else can one do if the challenges remain? Even though the Council has given more details and some clarifications, it appears that the same key issues remain in the areas of infrastructure, particularly the transport, water, flood risk, sewage, waste and energy sources. Then the controversial issue of the land buffers between existing residences where the Council have conceded a mere 25 metres of extra buffer with a set of criteria to be met otherwise the buffer will remain at 50 metres. This demonstrates how little the Council feel they have to take local views into account. Overall, so little has changed despite major concerns raised in the consultation and review processes.

However, one strategic change has crept in. In accepting the County’s concerns about northern access from the site into Wickham, there appears to be a move to change from a self contained garden suburb into the site now becoming an extension to North Fareham, with everything geared to be South facing and directing the majority of traffic onto the A32. This significant change is not in tune with the design concept of Welborne. It is my view that this change invalidates the existing planning concept. Just what is so undesirable with Welborne residents accessing the Wickham village and routes to the North, West and East? Cramping everything onto the A32 and South around the J10 of the motorway seems a flawed solution.

In summary then, the plan is still not sound.

Detailed responses.

MM1 CD32) Relationships between future planning activities

It is still not clear how the revised PUSH South Hampshire Strategy, including the SHMA, to be produced early 2016 will affect or be affected by the Welborne activity. Does PUSH have any on going influence on the Welborne Plan? By the time PUSH produce their South Hampshire Strategy, Welborne is in the early stages of Phase1, if the phasing is still on track by then. We need planning harmony here.

The final 3 lines of the Council response are reassuring, if one accepts that a new comprehensive Local Plan will be adopted, rather belatedly, in Spring/Summer 2018.

MM2 (WEL 2) New 1st bullet.....agreed.

Amended 6th bullet. agreed.

Note: sub bullet 4 change is supported. However It is right to include some proper access to and from the North of the site. A development this size cannot possibly be restricted to only one access road (A32).

Note: in the Summary above, the point is made about the strategic change of concept to join Welborne to Fareham north and make the whole site facing South is not agreed.

MM3 (CD38) WEL5

Buffer Zones

Still not sound. The decision to offer only 75m buffer zones under 5 stated conditions and retain the 50 m zones as the accepted norm is a very poor response to residents' concerns. Furthermore, the measurement should be from the property boundary, NOT the building boundary.

This is supposed to be a self- contained garden suburb, not a suburb attached to residents' gardens. My recommendation is a 250m buffer as a minimum, together with all the mitigating actions proposed in the documentation to ensure existing residents properties are not simply swallowed up major building activities. Where are the "Strategic Gaps", seen as so important in other planning applications in Fareham?

The Council has got this one wrong.

MM4 Agreed

MM5 WEL 6 A32 crossings**Still not sound**

There is an over emphasis on pedestrian and cycling crossing solutions at the expense of the flow of traffic along the A32. The traffic assumptions of low volumes travelling north up the A32 are, I believe, totally flawed. I urge more survey work on this route. How can 7 crossing points along a 2.3

km route with several points very close together be a balanced response? Why no footbridge suggested?

MM6 Agreed

MM7 Agreed. The appropriate phasing of linked infrastructure will be vital for success here.

MM8 Is Fareham's "hierarchy of centres" the way the retail and leisure facilities will be assessed? Can this hierarchy be spelled out here please?

MM9 Secondary School location (CD35)

My personal view is that the revised location of the secondary school does not meet the concept of a centrally focussed garden suburb, being located on the main road on the eastern edge of the community. Also it is much too close to the M27 junction. It should be in a more central/semi-rural location in the centre of the community. A secondary school emptying out on to the A32 at 4pm every day does not seem at all safe. In addition, the timing of this development must be determined by the need. It needs to be open well before 100's of students are already in school elsewhere. It cannot wait until the majority of students are in residence in Welborne before it opens.

MM10 WEL11 Affordable Housing – pre determined % mix of private/affordable housing and tenure mix.

There is a big risk with the Inspector pre determining a 30% mix of affordable housing and a similar mix of tenure types.

This is a very difficult process for the Council to manage. There are two major pressures, in my view. First the profit motive of the builders. One reads about the experience of other councils who bow to the pressure of developers/builders who produce new viability figures meaning that they cannot make the low cost housing percentages. The other pressure is in the design of the community so that there are large clusters and densities of low cost houses built to meet builders' cost constraints, ruining the garden suburb concept and isolating groups within the community.

I am not convinced these decisions are manageable and so it follows to say **NOT SOUND** to this section.

MM11 Agreed, providing that "southwards facing" means that access to and from the A32 is not the only access to and from Welborne and that there will be proper access in the North of the site towards Wickham. See also concerns in the Summary related to the South facing strategic change.

MM12. There seems to be a rogue number "4" in the text. Otherwise it is agreed.

MM13. Not sound. Advocating "slowing" or "discouraging" traffic movements at Wickham ignores the importance of the A32 going North from Fareham.

Much more work needs to be done on the transport strategy. Residents feel that not enough work has been done on the ground to establish the actual evidence of volumes and the congestion at peak times. The A32 is a busy road going both north and south. As well as being a key local road, the

northern route is used for multiple destinations; west at Wickham to Bishops Waltham and a route to Winchester, including a bus route; east at Wickham as a back route to Portsmouth and the A3, and heading north up the Meon Valley which leads to Alton and linking to the A31 to Farnham and places East such as Guildford and North up to junction 5 of the M3 at Odiham and so to London.

MM14.....AT THIS POINT THE NUMBERING goes astray. This is surely an additional point to **MM13** This point about clarifying the principal vehicular access to Welborne will be from the south via the A32 and Junction 10 of the M27 is AGREED. Not forgetting access from the North as well.

MM14 WEL29 Agreed

MM15 WEL33 Are views from the adjacent North Fareham communities not to be considered too?

MM16 WEL36 Agreed)

MM17 WEL37 Agreed) It is noted that the solutions to all these challenges are to be via detailed

MM18 WEL39 Agreed) planning applications. High risk.

MM19 WEL40 Agreed)

MM20 WEL41 Much more detail provided and much clearer. The challenge remains to build the critical infrastructure PRIOR to major works on site. The first priority is to improve the existing roads and then work on Junction 10 as soon the housing reaches 500 units. So if the Council can oblige the builders to stick to the detailed sequence and timings once they are known, then this section can be agreed. It is noted that there is a significant let out clause to any phasing, “unless it can be demonstrated.....” (p.21 second parag.)

Traffic Management (pages,14,15)

The fact remains that more work needs to be done with Hampshire County Council and the Highways Agency to derive a much better plan for the routes/traffic management. I am not convinced that the current all routes solution at Jnt 10 has any chance of managing or moving traffic satisfactorily. It appears to be very convoluted, with traffic meeting roundabouts and road junctions within close proximity of the motorway junction or the A32. There seems a lack of space to make this work and complete gridlock cannot be ruled out. The Eastern exit from the M27 appears to go North through Welborne, so reaching North Fareham will involve joining the A32 someway North before returning South to reach North Fareham or Fareham Centre or West. **By no means a sound design solution at this stage.**

MM21 WEL41 Agreed.

MM22 More explicit and clearer.

11.5 It is interesting that the Council choose to use the term that the Phasing Plan is a “**guide**... to the Council’s expected outcomes, including infrastructure.....” Does that mean that all the detail laid out in the phasing need only be seen as a guide to the developers? If so this whole section is not strong enough **and so is not sound**.

11.6 This reads that the Council intends to strengthen the Monitoring process. The process needs to ensure that it is a Control and Action process which demands the developers and builders stay on plan; that any amendments are properly processed and above all that corrective actions are initially identified and then corrected on a timely basis. I would like to see Control and Action words in the draft. I would also like to see local residents represented on all the monitoring groups.

So **NOT SOUND** until such words are seen in this paragraph.

Please take all my points into consideration

Geoff Newbold

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