

The Welborne Standing Conference – a consultation forum for local groups, organisations and partners established by Fareham Borough Council

From the independent chair: Henry Cleary OBE

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Mr Glynne Benge

BST Group

Mr Mark Thistlethwayte

Buckland Developments

4 September 2014

Dear Glynne and Mark,

Welborne Standing Conference – Workshop on 8th July on principal landowner proposals

1. Thank you for hosting the workshop for the Standing Conference at Dean Farm on 8th July and for giving a lengthy presentation of your emerging proposals which are likely to be set out more fully in an outline planning application later this year. This letter gives you the Standing Conference formal response and comments. In keeping with our practice it is based on notes made on the day as well as comments made on the draft letter subsequently circulated to members. We look forward to the next stage and your offer of a meeting to provide response on these comments before the application is submitted.

Introduction

2. The Standing Conference welcomed the opportunity of this workshop and to have your personal engagement in it was appreciated. This is the start of pre-application consultation and while many aspects of the outline application eg s106 and the Environmental Impact Assessment are still being worked on (and were not presented at workshop) the presentation was compelling in giving a good picture of the approach to development, design and layout of

the major uses, roads, green infrastructure as well as inviting views on a range of issues as indicated below and by reference to the structuring plan map (the plan which shows how your proposals fit into the larger area covered by the Welborne Plan. The workshop included an initial Q and A session to help clarify proposals and this is recorded in the Annex to this letter.

3. The Standing Conference also welcome the proposal for wider consultation via landowner websites and see it as important that these are actively promoted particularly to the neighbouring communities directly affected by Welborne.
4. What follows is without prejudice to further aspects/details of the outline application as they emerge. Our comments also need to be interpreted on the usual basis that they are without prejudice to the views of individual member organisations – some of whom are opposed to Welborne and some of whom support it. Our purpose is to find common ground and to comment on the proposals, on the basis that they can be improved to have greater benefits and less damaging impacts on neighbouring communities.
5. Our comments follow the 4 broad themes used at the workshop and also take into account issues on which the SC has already developed a considered position. For the record it should be noted that Part 1 of the Workshop had a wider attendance, including Fareham Borough Council Members and Executive and a wider selection of community groups. For propriety reasons Part 2, in which the SC views were developed in themed workshop format, was restricted to SC members or their nominated reps.

Theme A – Transport and making connections

6. Junction 10 (which is broadly based on Option 3 in the Welborne Plan) is still a major concern in terms of awaiting more detail on design and operation. However there was a wide welcome for the proposal in the developers' proposals that it could be completed in years 3/4 of the development (2018/9) rather than 2022 as appeared to be the case in the Welborne Plan;
7. No information was presented on off site improvements needed to deal with access to Welborne and mitigate impacts in other parts of Fareham and to the north in Wickham, as well as motorway noise (see para 14 and 19 below) . This was a major concern as indicated in the previous local traffic impacts workshop eg as in traffic impacts of Welborne in North Fareham.
8. With regard to the A32, the latest proposals appear to be for 4 roundabouts north of the motorway with a dual carriageway up to the first of those roundabouts. It was felt that these 4 junctions could slow down the already

busy A32 (although traffic figures do not support this) and there was a concern that north-south traffic could be diverted through Welborne.

9. The local perception was that the A32 is already 'too' busy and it is important that there are no further developments north of those currently proposed under the Welborne Development Plan. Maintaining its "rural" feel on the approach to Wickham was important.
10. There was a general welcome for the "street sections" displayed in the presentations showing a broad "tree lined avenue" approach with segregated footways and cycleways. In terms of encouraging cycling there could be an issue in the stated preference for residential areas to be on straight roads. This may present difficulties for cyclists as junctions tend to demand that cyclists slow or stop at each one. Work was ongoing to make cycle route free flowing and the outline application should re-assure on these points.
11. Knowle Road (and North Fareham/Wickham). Safety concerns were expressed over these areas especially during the construction phase. The response was that it was intended that a 30 mph limit would be placed on the Knowle road and that there were plans to limit potential conflict in all of these areas by separating construction and residential traffic by building a new road for construction traffic and forcing them to use it under conditions included in the contracts.
12. The plans detail a re-cycling facility just in Pook Lane off the A32. Concerns were raised that due to the popularity of such facilities beyond Welborne there could be long queues of traffic backing onto the A32, although the future of such facilities was being reviewed.

Theme B - Environment, green infrastructure and healthy/attractive neighbourhoods

13. There was a general welcome for some of the green infrastructure features of the plans, particularly the 90metre wide green corridor which would form part of a north-south route (a Standing Conference priority) and contribute to SANGS. There was a need to spell out more clearly what the SANGS benefits would be – what would be different from now in terms of how Dash Wood and Fareham Common were managed. Would the current ecological interest of Dashwood be protected. There was a risk that the north – south green corridor (while welcome) would funnel a large number of visitors into Dash Wood which was an important conservation site.
14. There was a wider concern about the need to include more screening and reducing the impact of Welborne on neighbouring areas. Landscape and

screen features alongside the M27 were part of this as was the potential for quieter road surfacing on the M27.

15. The principal landowners' commitment to good quality planting at an early stage, the need for mature trees and creating a tree nursery was welcomed.
16. There was a particular concern on impact of the development on Funtley. This was not just a question of the 50 metre buffer zone which was regarded as unacceptable (the Standing Conference has previously sought a minimum 100 metre buffer zone for all the bordering communities) but of the impact on the whole character and identity of the village. A meeting to discuss the Funtley concerns would be helpful.

Theme C- Employment

17. **Location of Employment Uses** The proposed employment areas are situated in a broad swathe parallel to the M27. The location of the employment uses was logical and supported. Proximity to the junctions with the M27 would minimise the intrusion of heavy goods vehicles. In the short term access can be provided from the A32 but it is hoped that the new Junction 10 will be commenced in 2018, subject to receiving a government grant (via SOLEP). Existing accesses will have to be utilised in the short term.
18. The proposed Junction 10 arrangements relied upon the continued use of the slip road to Portsmouth. This means that HGVs will have to travel through the development back to the A32. The impact upon the A32 would be considerable as it will have two new roundabouts between the M27 and the Knowle Road. The A32 will continue to provide access into North Fareham and serve the areas to the north including Wickham. This was undesirable but may be unavoidable.
19. **Noise from the M27** This was an issue that is of wider concern – not just employment. It was accepted that the area close to the M27 could not be developed for residential uses because of issues of noise and air quality. Thus, the employment area can help to mitigate noise and protect the residential areas beyond to the north. A proposal to provide 4m high acoustic barriers along the northern edge of the M27, was felt to create an unpleasant corridor for people travelling along the M27. Some form of palisade fencing might be preferable to enable glimpsed views into the Welborne area. Glazed barriers were also suggested. The use of "Quiet Tarmac" on the M27 (J11 to west of Funtley) could yield higher benefits than use of acoustic barriers.
20. It might also be possible to clad buildings in material that absorbed sound. Although the land is lower than the M27 and buildings will not be high, it was

considered that they should offer an attractive elevation to the south as they will also be seen from Kiln Road and the houses in this area of Fareham. The view of Welborne from North Fareham is a critical issue.

21. **The Division of Commercial Uses** The Welborne plan proposes 50% B8 uses, which the Standing Conference questioned as a very high proportion which would attract large distribution warehouses, with high levels of movement and low levels of employment. Though demand was high, this would only create +/- 40% of the jobs attributable to other commercial uses.
22. The landowner view was for an alternative strategy, strongly in favour of creating an 'employment led development', with an objective to create 5000 jobs focused on the Fareham area. The development could provide a hierarchy of employment uses including an innovation centre with flexible workspace provided with superfast broad band, and a tiered approach to include home/offices and other forms of floorspace.
23. The Standing Conference has attached high importance to the objectives of the Welborne Plan to create a balanced and self contained settlement rather than a wider commuter destination, and this will be challenging (even in Poundbury 80% of people working there commute into and out of the settlement). Policies should be strengthened to minimise this at Welborne.
24. **Accessibility of employment to Residential Areas** Care will be needed to achieve attractive, usable walking/cycling links – Welborne was a large development. The area will also be served by the BRT which will pass through the heart of the residential areas and link the Plan Area to the areas of Fareham and Gosport to the south.
25. **Parking Areas** Parking should be both adequate and discrete to avoid the situation on the Whiteley Business Park where poor provision meant wide roads lined on both sides by parked vehicles.
26. **Other Employment Provision** While the designated Employment Areas will provide the greatest number of jobs in the Plan Area, the District and Local (Village) Centres will provide a range of retail jobs; the schools will provide opportunities for teachers and support jobs. Proposals for care homes, a hotel, and leisure facilities will widen the range of job opportunities.

Theme D – The District and Local Centre

27. It was important that the district centre was more than just shops and aimed from the start at achieving a mix of uses which would ensure activity in the evenings and at weekends;

28. An early convenience store easily accessed from the employment areas (a previous concern of the standing Conference) would help to establish a role. There was also a case for managing rentals and opening dates to provide an incentive for smaller enterprises, even if that meant holding back a national name.
29. Flexible space should be a feature – enabling organisations/enterprises to take space within buildings rather than have to rent the whole.
30. Experience elsewhere supports forming an inter-denominational/third sector association which could manage space provided for the purpose (eg via s106) to help build community, including a “welcome” unit which would be the first port of call and enquiry point for new residents.
31. Schools should be planned to be multi-use from the start while new sports facilities could also help develop community. If possible a health building should be established early both at the District Centre and the Local Centre.
32. People in neighbouring areas will respond to the new facilities eg those using the A32 and people in Knowle may become early users.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Cleary', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Henry Cleary, Chair, Welborne Standing Conference

Annex

Questions and responses on overarching issues on the presentation

1. What is **the total volume of housing at Welborne**? The outline application likely to come forward from the two principal landowners would be for 5400 homes. However development on third party ownerships within the plan area could see this total increase. In addition if further SANGS land (land that must be provided to mitigate impacts on conservation areas) was obtained the two principal landowners may increase the volume of housing on their land;
2. Has there been a final **SANGS requirement** set by Natural England to compensate for impacts on conservation areas? The SANGS element of the proposals is a mix of land to be safeguarded for conservation and a cash contribution to projects off site – the final mix will be settled through the application process. SANGS must be in place before 750 homes are built;
3. What is the significance of **differences between the Welborne Plan and the outline application**? If approved, the Welborne Plan sets the baseline but applications could vary from it where they can show good reason or advantages in terms of viability, deliverability etc.;
4. The **timing of planning applications**? On current indications the structuring plan (as attached here) was likely to be submitted in October/November followed by the joint outline application with early phase detailed applications early in 2015, but these dates were still to be confirmed;
5. The **secondary school and Knowle Triangle**. The application assumes that the secondary school would be located in the District Centre and does not propose use of Knowle Triangle for playing fields (or other uses);
6. **Phasing of development**? Given the scale and long time period of development the SC would welcome as much clarity as possible on this when the application is submitted;
7. **Design** While the differences in land uses and ownerships were understood, the SC would be looking for a common, compatible approach and would like to see this in a further presentation.