

## **Submission Statement to Independent Examination into the South Wiltshire Core Strategy Review DPD**

Submission on behalf of Mr Peter Bradshaw (Landowner – Longhedge site, Salisbury)

Submitted by Steve Briggs (Partner, Chartered Town Planner, BSc DipTP DipDBE MRTPI) of Smiths Gore.

The following submission sets out the position in advance of the Examination hearings.

The following summary reflects the key points made in the original written submission to the Wiltshire Council Review document and this is followed by specific responses to the questions raised by the Inspector.

### **Summary of position re proposed 'focussed changes' in relation to Longhedge (Old Sarum) – FOC/04**

- The Submitted Draft South Wiltshire Core Strategy Document is considered to be based upon well-researched and formulated evidence, thorough analysis and professional assessment and a well-conceived strategic approach. As submitted this plan will deliver the required outcomes and meet the objectives and needs of the area.
- In relation to the Longhedge (Old Sarum) allocated site the case has already been well-made by the Council, and supported by evidence and representations, concept masterplan and support from the landowner.
- The proper planning approach for the Longhedge site dictates that it should not be considered in a piecemeal way and that the full benefits and delivery of a high quality scheme of development are dependent upon a comprehensive approach being taken to the overall site.
- There appears to be no logic to the Council's position as represented in their proposed 'focussed changes'. Having previously carried out full consultations and assessments and concluded that the 800 dwellings for the Longhedge site was acceptable and deliverable, they seem to have now arbitrarily decided that 450 is the right number without any real change in circumstance or evidence.
- In order to ensure proper delivery of the CS it is essential that sites allocated are tested and properly assessed in terms of viability and deliverability. At 800 dwellings and 8 hectares of employment land the Longhedge site 'stacks up'. With a reduction of 350 dwellings the deliverability of a well-planned and coherent development that brings with it the required level of infrastructure and community facilities has to be seriously questioned. At the very least, a partial allocation with a 'promise' of more to come will not help to ensure a well-planned and high quality development that supports a balanced community. For the sake of just 350 dwellings the comprehensive approach to delivering a sound and well-planned development should be adopted.
- The English Heritage concerns have been discussed and the original objection has been tempered during the lead up to the Examination and during the hearing session itself, through the offer of guarantees to involve EH in the detailed masterplanning process and to ensure a graded approach to housing density as the development extends further north. The northern part of the site will be

more dominated by structural landscape and tree and hedge planting with the buildings taking a subservient role in the landscape. The site is large enough to successfully accommodate this approach. This position formed the basis for the Statement of Common Ground agreed with the Council on 19 February 2010.

- Nothing in terms of the site context, physical circumstances or fundamental planning policy context has changed since the original evidence was given in support of the Longhedge (Old Sarum) site, except for a somewhat contrived reassessment of the site in the light of the seemingly arbitrary decision to reduce housing numbers. Therefore it is considered that the Submission Draft SWCS should be adhered to as a 'sound' and 'legal' DPD and the proposed changes now put forward by Wiltshire Council should be rejected.

The following points are in direct response to the questions raised by the Inspector in his Hearing Programme document of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 in relation to the Independent Examination into the 'Review' and proposed changes now put forward by Wiltshire Council.

#### **Issue 4 – Consistency with National Policy**

The clear aims of Government planning policy have now become clear. The Ministerial statements at the time of the Budget (March 2011) made it clear that economic growth is to be promoted through the planning process and that Local Planning Authorities need to plan for such growth and encourage it. The government's definition of economic growth includes housing development and it is their stated aim to provide 'decent homes' for all those in need.

The emerging new National Planning Policy Framework, as trailed and introduced by recent ministerial statements, is geared towards the provision of new housing to meet the needs and demands of both affordable and market housing requirements. Indeed, the most recent proposal from Government highlights this drive for ensuring adequate provision for housing by promoting the argument for an additional 20% over and above the required 'five year supply'.

In the same way that Wiltshire Council is seeking to reflect recent changes in Government policy by taking advantage of the proposed abolition of the RSS, they should also be mindful of emerging National Planning Policy and in particular the drive for meeting the housing requirement and to ensure the required level of delivery by making adequate provision in Core Strategies. To this end, they need to accommodate a contingency element to support that drive for delivering decent homes to meet need and demand.