



WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

**SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY REVIEW
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

**HEARING STATEMENT
IN RESPECT OF ISSUE 6**

NETHERHAMPTON ROAD AND LONGHEDGE

**PREPARED BY PRO VISION PLANNING AND DESIGN ON
BEHALF OF BEMERTON FARMS**

Ref: HS/Pro Vision Planning and Design/2845/6

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SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY EiP

ISSUE 6: NETHERHAMPTON ROAD AND LONGHEDGE

POSITION STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF BEMERTON FARMS

1. What evidence is there to support the deletion of the site South of Netherhampton Road and part of the site at Longhedge as opposed to other sites?
 - 1.1 Our 2010 Representations on behalf of Bemerton Farms did not address the SSA because it concluded that Land at Netherhampton Road is a sustainable location for development. However, the SSA is now being used to give priority to some strategic sites over others. It has therefore now been appropriate for Bemerton Farms to address this use of the SSA.
 - 1.2 Section 5 of our May 2011 representations sets out Bemerton Farms' concerns regarding the Council's review of the four proposed greenfield Strategic Site Allocations and in particular the proposed deletion of land South of Netherhampton Road.
 - 1.3 In response to the first question under Issue 6 we say that there is no such evidence. On the contrary, our May 2011 Section 5 provides sound evidence in favour of retaining Netherhampton Road. In that respect, to assist the Inspector, we would like to add brief comments on Topic Paper 20, Salisbury Vision and other Consultation responses.
2. Topic Paper 20
 - 2.1 Topic Paper 20¹ ('the Topic Paper') sets out the methodology and results for the Council's review and is therefore the focus of this Statement. All paragraph references in this subsection 2 below therefore relate to Topic Paper 20 unless otherwise stated.
 - 2.2 Paragraph 10.9 states that the redevelopment of Churchfields will probably take up to 15 years, and claims therefore that the imperative of delivering the decant land in the first years of the Plan Period will not be so acute. This is illogical and flawed. In order for the redevelopment of Churchfields to commence a substantial number of businesses will need to have been relocated. It is therefore imperative for decant sites to be provided early in the Plan Period to allow businesses to relocate in advance of redevelopment works commencing. The time taken for businesses to relocate should also not be underestimated.
 - 2.3 The criterion based approach used to reassess the 4 strategic sites was based on 8 criteria (as set out in our May 2011 representations). In concluding which sites are most

¹ Review of the South Wiltshire Core Strategy (January 2011)

suitable for development (i.e. and which sites should continue to be included in the Core Strategy) all criteria were equally weighted. The equal weighting of sustainability against other factors such as biodiversity/wildlife, place making and consultation feedback fails to reflect Central Government's commitment to sustainable development as set out in PPS1 and reinforced in the emerging Localism Bill and Ministerial Statement on Planning for Growth².

- 2.4 As part of our May 2011 representations we reviewed the Council's criterion based assessment in the Topic Paper and concluded that land South of Netherhampton Road should score significantly (33%) higher than that stated in the Topic Paper. The Pro Vision assessment is based on current up-to-date evidence and clearly shows how the Council's assessment is flawed.
- 2.5 In addition to the points previously raised, Fugglestone Red is scored 4 (paragraph 11.51 and Appendix 1 (under the sub-heading 'Place Making')) due to its ability to help facilitate the delivery of new buildings for the recently formed West Salisbury Academy, as well as the delivery of a local centre. In contrast land South of Netherhampton Road is concluded as being isolated and not making any contributions to community benefits for the wider community.
- 2.6 These conclusions are inconsistent as Land South of Netherhampton Road would also deliver a local centre, as well as facilitating the redevelopment of Churchfields Industrial Estate (a fundamentally important community benefit) through the provision of decant sites. Furthermore the assessment fails to acknowledge that Land South of Netherhampton Road is no more isolated than Hampton Park or Longhedge from the existing built up area.
- 2.7 A further inconsistency is that Land South of Netherhampton Road is criticised for being relatively remote and separated from the existing community of Harnham, despite the development including a local centre to serve new residents and being within walking and cycling distance of Harnham and wider areas (including the City Centre). In contrast Longhedge is supported by the Council due to its ability to support local facilities and create a more self-contained community. It is illogical to conclude that the creation of a self contained community at Longhedge is positive yet the creation of a self contained community at Land South of Netherhampton Road would be negative in terms of place making.
- 2.8 The table provided at paragraph 5.56 of our May 2011 representations summarises and compares our assessment with that undertaken by the Council. It is evident the areas where the Council's assessment is particularly flawed are:
- Sustainability;

² Dated 23 March 2011

- Landscape Appraisal;
- Potential Heritage Risk; and
- Place Shaping.

3. Salisbury Vision

- 3.1 The Question and Answer pages on the Salisbury Vision Website formerly included a section on the redevelopment plans for Churchfields Industrial Estate. It is noted that this page has recently been removed from the website. A copy is however attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 In response to the question “So where would existing businesses at Churchfields be relocated?” the website stated that *“Most businesses, understandably, prefer to be located in Salisbury, and this means that the majority of this land would be in or close to the City. One strong contender is land at Harnham, south of Netherhampton Road, as there is room for development”*.
- 3.3 In response to the question *“But what about residents who live on Netherhampton Road and Harnham Road”* the website stated that *“The western half of the A3094 is ideal for heavier traffic as it is a direct route to the west via the A30 or A36. Businesses reliant on HGV’s coming from the east and south would be strongly encouraged to avoid using residential Harnham Road and New Harnham Road by using the Salisbury ring road and coming back in from the west on the A3094”*.
- 3.4 In response to the question *“Are there any sites that can completely avoid residential streets?”* the website stated that *“Unfortunately, there are no appropriate alternative sites near the city centre. Solstice Park at Amesbury does offer a great choice of business space, but we know that many city businesses need and prefer to remain in Salisbury. However, proposed mixed-use developments at Old Sarum and Fugglestone Red, might be able to accommodate some Churchfields businesses”*.
- 3.5 It is clear from these questions and others relating to Churchfields Industrial Estate that Land to the South of Netherhampton Road is key to achieving the fundamental objective of decanting Churchfields and redeveloping it for residential development. Salisbury Vision did not consider Solstice Park as suitable for decanting most Churchfields businesses. Furthermore Salisbury Vision considered that employment land at Old Sarum and Fugglestone Red might only be able to accommodate some of the Churchfields businesses.
- 3.6 Thus, the deletion of land South of Netherhampton Road would fail to fulfil a key part of the Salisbury Vision and the Core Strategy objectives. Again that indicates that the answer to the first question under Issue 6 is “None whatever”.

4. Other Consultation Responses Relevant to Issue 6

4.1 Bemerton Farms support the following representations made by others:

a) Representor 50 – Salisbury Civic Society

- By deleting the proposed development south of Netherhampton Road the opportunity to create an alternative business park to Churchfields has been passed up.

b) Representor 84 – Martin Hawthorn, WYG

- Emphasises that sustainability is an over arching principle and should not be placed on a par with the other criteria – a more sophisticated weighting system needs to be used.

5. What Alternatives to the deletion of these Sites have been considered and why were they rejected?

5.1 The Inspector refers to the case of *Save Historic Newmarket Ltd v. Forest Heath District Council [2011] EWHC 606*. This matter is dealt with at paragraphs 6.7 and 6.8 of our May 2011 representations.

5.2 There is no evidence whatever that the Council has considered any alternatives to the Revised CS. By way of illustration that might have included, for example:

a) Reducing or eliminating Fuggleston Red to reflect the Local Plan Inspector's criticisms of the site (the relevant extract from his report was attached as Appendix 5 to our May 2011 Representations) and retaining Longhedge and Netherhampton Road.

b) Or eliminating all of Longhedge, and retaining Netherhampton Road.

5.3 Furthermore we have made the point in relation to Issue 5 that alternative scenarios have not been tested against the Strategic Transport Options.

5.4 It would therefore appear to be a prima facie case that the Council has failed to meet its requirements as identified in "Save Historic Newmarket".

6. Conclusions

6.1 Proposed Review Change FOC/04 would be unsound because:

- a) It is not justified by the evidence put forward by the Council for the reduction in housing and employment land, which is incomplete and flawed (as explained in relation to Issue 2).
- b) It is not justified by the evidence relied on by the Council for eliminating Netherhampton Road, which is flawed, for reasons set out in our May 2011 Representations Section 5.0, and the additional comments above.
- c) The Council has failed to evaluate any alternatives to FOC/04.

6.2 In the absence of any complete consistent and reliable evidence to the contrary the only way to make the Core Strategy sound in this respect is to reinstate Netherhampton Road in Core Policy 2 as originally proposed in the Submission Core Strategy.

Plans for the redevelopment of Churchfields Industrial Estate as part of the Salisbury Vision – your questions answered

Q. What is the Churchfields Industrial Estate?

A. It is a 33-hectare industrial estate, a short walk from Salisbury city centre, which has grown piecemeal over 40 years into the district's biggest employment site.

Q. How many people work there?

A. There are around 4,500 people working for 165 companies with an estimated combined turnover of £600m.

Q. That's good, isn't it?

A. There is no doubt that the industrial estate is the area's most important employment centre, but there are a number of problems which need to be addressed. It is poorly situated and would be better served as a redeveloped mixed use site, with a four-star hotel and conference centre, offices and much-needed affordable homes, while retaining existing 'light use' businesses.

Q. What are the problems?

A. Firstly, it is widely accepted that there are a number of businesses on site which are inappropriately located. They generate excessive HGV traffic which clog up local residential roads and the city centre, causing congestion and pollution. Something needs to be done about this now as it

is virtually certain that plans for the Brunel Link and Harnham Relief Road, which would have reduced this problem, will now not go ahead.

Secondly, the site is already full. There is no room for expansion because Churchfields is hemmed in on three sides by the River Nadder and water meadows and the railway line on the fourth. To retain existing businesses, and attract new ones, we need to offer them room to grow. In other words, Churchfields cannot offer future growth.

Q. Why wasn't this all sorted out years ago?

A. A lack of a masterplan to guide development back in the 1970s meant that Salisbury lost out on new living, working and leisure opportunities. The industrial estate gained a momentum of its own, and nobody has grasped the nettle since then on how the site could better serve the needs of Salisbury. Over 40 years the place has become shabby and neglected. Rejuvenation is required.

Q. So what is Salisbury Vision's proposal to redevelop Churchfields Industrial Estate?

A. There could be a four-star hotel and conference centre, along with offices, much-needed affordable homes and existing 'light' businesses.

Q. Why a four-star hotel and conference centre?

A. Salisbury doesn't have such a dedicated, upmarket facility. Most cities do, generating visitors and money and creating more local jobs. The famous views across the water meadows to Salisbury Cathedral, coupled with a scenic path into the city centre, would prove a major draw.

Q. Why offices?

A. Salisbury has little in the way of purpose-built, modern office accommodation, and it would mean being able to meet the requirements of office employers and other growing economic sectors. Prestigious companies will be more inclined to take root here if Salisbury can offer vibrancy and a good quality of life. Employees would spend money in our city, and the proximity of the railway station means many could commute or live locally without relying on cars. Salisbury is home to four major financial services businesses and we must make sure they, and other potential companies, don't walk away through lack of suitable space. Also, Salisbury currently 'loses' 12,500 workers every day to other areas.

Q. Why homes?

A. It is anticipated that the Salisbury and Wilton area could provide 8,700 new homes, around 435 a year, towards the government building target of three million homes in the UK by 2020. Churchfields could potentially provide 500 homes.

Q. Why affordable homes?

A. Average house prices in Salisbury in 2007 were more than 11 times average earnings, compared to the average of nine times in England and Wales. House prices in Wiltshire grew by 233% between 1995 and 2006, with Salisbury losing youngsters and graduates to more affordable cities and towns. There is also an acute shortfall in affordable homes. Evidence shows that by 2009 an estimated 669 households every year will need affordable housing. The housing waiting list continues to grow, standing at 2,894 in May 2008. A rising elderly population – an extra 10,000 by 2026 in south Wiltshire – also gives rise to the need for specially designed homes.

Overall, the population of the district is expected to grow by about 14,000 by 2026. Housing development at Churchfields would have an important role in meeting demand. Few other city centre sites offer such scope.

Q. But house prices have been falling...

A. Cautious mortgage lenders are reverting back to lending three to four times a person's annual earnings, which would include a cash deposit, so it would still be difficult for many youngsters in Salisbury to get a foot on the housing ladder even if prices halved. More than 16% of all our households in south Wiltshire are home to key workers, such as nurses and teachers, many of whom cannot afford open market housing.

Q. Where do house builders stand when it comes to supplying affordable homes in their developments?

A. We are recommending a minimum 40 per cent of affordable homes in all new schemes of five or more homes.

Q. What do you mean by existing 'light' businesses?

Some businesses on Churchfields would complement the four-star hotel and conference centre, offices and affordable homes because they don't generate lorry traffic and operate quietly. It would not be necessary to relocate all the businesses.

Q. What other problems are there at Churchfields?

A. Walking or cycling into the industrial estate is not pleasant. There is little off-road parking so cars park on the roads, creating hazards. The constant noise of lorries, plus the dangers they present to pedestrians and cyclists,

is also a factor. It is felt by many that Churchfields is somewhat bleak and shabby.

Q. How many hectares of land are required to accommodate new and expanding businesses in the Salisbury district within the next 18 years?

A. Up to 64 hectares – equivalent to nearly two Churchfields. It will be a tough challenge to find the right places acceptable to everyone, but we can't shy away from difficult issues. It is in the interests of everyone that Salisbury's economy moves forward.

Q. How much additional employment is anticipated?

A. Official figures estimate 13,500 new jobs within the next two decades. If south Wiltshire is to have a thriving economy we need to make sure that there is enough land so that existing businesses expand and we can attract new ones.

Q. So where would existing businesses at Churchfields be relocated?

A. Most businesses, understandably, prefer to be located in Salisbury, and this means that the majority of this land would be in or close to the city. One strong contender is land at Harnham, south of the Netherhampton Road, as there is room for development.

Q. But what about residents who live on Netherhampton Road and Harnham Road?

A. The western half of the A3094 is ideal for heavier traffic as it is a direct route to the west via the A30 or A36. Businesses reliant on HGVs coming from the east and south would be strongly encouraged to avoid using

residential Harnham Road and New Harnham Road by using the Salisbury ring road and coming back in from the west on the A3094.

Q. Are there any sites that can completely avoid residential streets?

A. Unfortunately, there are no appropriate alternative sites near the city centre. Solstice Park at Amesbury does offer a great choice of business space, but we know that many city businesses need and prefer to remain in Salisbury. However, proposed mixed-use developments at Old Sarum and Fugglestone Red, might be able to accommodate some Churchfields businesses.

Q. Surely we can do without a modern, sustainable local business park and spare the trouble of upheaval?

A. No, for the reasons already outlined. This is the difficult challenge we face – balancing the economic needs of the city with what is acceptable to local residents. Also, the economic importance of Salisbury having a four-star hotel and conference centre, modern, purpose-built offices and affordable homes cannot be underestimated. There is a clear and compelling case for employment growth and housing growth to ensure Salisbury is a place to invest. Churchfields is the most viable option.

Q. Isn't the Churchfields issue undermining the long-term confidence of businesses there?

A. That is not the intention. The idea is to provide a practical solution which will see all the various businesses prosper, whether it be at a new site or at Churchfields. Most business people at the site are acutely aware of its cramped nature and the problems caused by HGVs driving through the historic city centre. They can see the bigger picture.

Q. What is the Salisbury Vision?

A. It is a joint private and public sector initiative to revitalise key areas within the city of Salisbury whilst ensuring that its historic uniqueness is protected. The partnership's aims are to create high-quality facilities, new jobs and an improved and sustainable environment for the people of Salisbury and beyond. Salisbury Vision project members are Salisbury District Council, South West of England Regional Development Agency (South West RDA) and Wiltshire County Council.

Q. What level of public consultation has there been regarding the development of a new set of planning policies for the district, which form the backbone of the Salisbury Vision?

A. Extensive. Some 6,000 people responded to the first round and around 8,000 comments were received on the second. There is public and business support for the Churchfields redevelopment.