

SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

**Statement of Common Ground
as agreed between
Wiltshire Council and
Blanefield Property Co**

19 FEBRUARY 2010

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Matter 11

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Wiltshire Council (the Council¹) and Blanefield Property Co (Blanefield) agree on the analysis of the issues and opportunities affecting Old Sarum Airfield and the policy framework against which proposals to address these will be considered found in paragraph 6.41 and Core Policy 9 of the Core Strategy. There is partial agreement on related Map 5.

The heritage value of the site is recognised and respected:

- its historical association with the development of military aviation and aerial archaeology
- survival of a core of historic buildings, some listed, with particular importance ascribed to the unsevered functional and visual relationship between the remaining historic hangars and the flying field. The character and setting of this historic site has degraded through major and minor intrusions (employment estates, parking, modern furniture etc) and varied levels of maintenance of the listed buildings, particularly the hangars.
- the site has been in continuous use for flying since inception.

There is currently limited public access to and viewpoints of the hangars and limited awareness and understanding of the airfield's heritage.

Both parties are also conscious of the site's relationship to the wider landscape notably the development on its boundaries, Old Sarum SAM and the urban edge of Salisbury.

Liaison between the Council and Blanefield commenced during the Old Sarum Airfield Conservation Area designation process. The designation was based on Atkins Heritage's appraisal (STU/43) and, following a critique by Feilden and Mawson, Blanefield raised concerns that

- the CA boundary did not relate to any specific period of the airfield's military operations and made unjustified assumptions in defining the flying field
- The appraisal was not adequate in that it did not follow published English Heritage guidance and made no proposals for the future management of the site. It ignored the major detractors which lie outside the designated Conservation Area and in multiple ownership and that the most realistic opportunity for direct and indirect mitigation of their negative impact lies with adjoining airfield land.

¹ Salisbury District Council before 1 April 2009.

Subsequently Blaneield offered to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (REP/1397/1) to provide a comprehensive assessment of the historical importance and environment of this area and make recommendations how to enhance its qualities, improve it as a business and local amenity and respect its historic fabric. The draft CMP was given to the Council in April 2008.

Neither the Atkins nor Blaneield documents represent Council policy. There is no adopted Conservation Area Management Plan. Although development proposals at the airfield will be considered against national guidance and saved/new development management policies, including for heritage, these do not provide a framework which integrates resolution of all the varied aspects of the identified issues. A site-specific approach is consistent with proposals, discussed through Topic Paper 13 Conservation Areas and Addendums (TOP13A-C), for incorporation in the intended Heritage Management SPD, to produce plans for enhancement of conservation areas.

The purpose of Core Policy 9 therefore is to establish a coherent set of principles, including potential areas for development, to guide and give certainty to the future management, use and development of the airfield in respect of:

- conservation, respect and enhancement of its distinct character, setting and heritage and interpretation, explanation and promotion of the same including as a tourist and local amenity attraction.
- beneficial use and management for the airfield to support its heritage status
- continuation of flying activities of an economically sustainable form, thus retaining the airfield in its historic use, and control over aircraft noise
- benefit to the local area and the city of Salisbury through provision of high quality and sensitively and appropriately located residential and commercial development. This development is also an incentive to secure the improvements sought by the policy.
- Both parties agree that there is an inconsistency between the last sentence of paragraph 6.4(ii) of the Core Strategy and Core Policy 9 , in that the former mentions the principle of sympathetic new development and the policy mentions only housing. This should be revised to be consistent and read 'sympathetic new development'.
- The Council's Employment Land Review (STU/11) identifies the employment area between the Conservation Area and the Portway as one of eight strategically important to South Wiltshire's economy.

Policy CP9 is first detailed in the Core Strategy proposed submission document in July 2009 (SWCS/01A). The Preferred Options September 2008 (CON/15 Page 11, point c) refers to housing development around Old Sarum and states strategic landscaping to screening the existing functional employment buildings will be required to ensure views from Old Sarum and across the aerodrome are greatly improved. This is a clear reference to the potential for development at Old Sarum Airfield.

Furthermore the Landscape Character Assessment (STU/20 page 92) offers support to the policy approach in its objectives for the Boscombe Down LCA. These include to “*screen visually harsh urban edges and discourage unsympathetic ribbon development and associated planting*”.

Definition of Potential Areas for Development (Map 5)

Issue 11.1 - On what basis were the potential areas for development on Map 5 selected. In particular what assessment has been made of the potential effect, positive or negative, that developing these areas would have on the setting of the OSACA, of listed buildings within that area and of the OS SAM?

The areas have been identified as those capable of contributing to the preservation of the essential elements of the OSA Conservation Area and/or able to contribute directly or indirectly to mitigation and enhancement proposals.

Areas (subsequently the three areas on Map 5) initially identified in Feilden and Mawson's critique of the Atkins appraisal were discussed with the Council in January 2007, prior to designation of the Conservation Area, and then considered through the Blanefield Conservation Management Plan (REP/1397/1 Figure 26 Opportunities for enhancement, page 34). Blanefield received a letter of support from the Council to pursue these areas early in 2007.

These potential development areas have been defined and refined by detailed investigations and analysis financed by Blanefield – on landscape and visual impact (ZVI and computer simulations), archaeology (intrusive and non intrusive), noise, runway, ecology. Work is most advanced for the areas on the northern edge of airfield - archaeological investigation for the south east area has been inhibited by location of pig yurts.

Each area has different opportunities and constraints deriving from their location, adjacent uses and linkages influencing the types and forms of development most sensitive and appropriate to the location.

Definition of potential areas in Map 5 is indicative and does not necessarily mean that they will be fully or inappropriately developed:

- in the north west area the original line of the Portway and the view cone to Old Sarum SM should be kept clear.
- Proposals will be subject to stringent site specific (CP9) and normal development management policies including on noise pollution, listed buildings, conservation areas, landscape, protection of amenity, sustainability, access.

Core Policy 9 requires preparation and submission of a master plan for the development at which stage these detailed issues will be assessed and determined.

- Northern Areas

Landscaping is either not appropriate or sufficient to mitigate the negative impact of the existing industrial units. Development of a scale and articulation to achieve this is proposed and this approach will be tested to ensure that further development will not exacerbate the problem.

A southward shift of the runway is proposed:

- opportunity for development along the employment estate/airfield frontage
- noise contours relocated away from existing Portway housing without impinging on Ford housing
- no impact on the historic relationship between the hangars and flying field.

North west area – mixed commercial and residential development and planting to screen the existing mass of Castle Gate development in views across the airfield from the south and from Old Sarum SAM.

North east area – commercial development more fitting in form and alignment than existing gable ends of units. This area is suitable for relocation of flying related facilities from the hangar frontages, interpretation/information on the airfield's heritage and a viewing area to hangars and flying field.

- South East Area

This potential area for development was identified in the proposed submission Core Strategy (SWCS/01 A) but deleted from the submitted Core Strategy through resolution of Full Council on November 10 2009 in order to safeguard the separate identity of the settlement of Ford and to protect the amenity of its residents. This change is the single point of disagreement between the Council and Blanefield.

Aircraft Noise

Issue 11.2 - What potential would the development of these sites have to secure some control over the noise of aircraft using the airfield?

There is acknowledged noise disturbance for local residents from the flying activity. Previous investigation by the Council identified no practicable or statutory control options exist. Since then alleviation has been sought through voluntary agreement and is wholly dependent on the characters and requirements of the flying operators which can and will change over time.

Both parties agree it should be possible to negotiate a matching of viable flying activities with some control over noise generated by aviation use including for example type of aircraft, frequency of flying and southward shift of the runway as a legal requirement pertaining to planning permission.

The Council and Blanefield note that Core Policy 9 seeks other benefits than control over aircraft noise, notably enhancement.