



Friday 8 December 2017

Dear Consultation Team

Consultation Response to Draft Local Plan

I write to you in my capacity as Chair of Governors of Brookfield Community School, in response to Fareham Borough Council's consultation on the draft Local Plan 2036. The school's students are drawn from across the Western Wards and Titchfield CAT areas, in general terms. In considering the school's response, Governors and senior staff have had the benefit of attending the public meetings in Titchfield and Warsash in November, reviewing the draft plan on line and having some direct conversations with officers and Members of the Borough Council at the exhibitions and subsequently.

Overall, there is a lot to be commended in the draft – particularly in relation to the importance of green space, the need for local employment opportunities to reduce the daily 'out commute' from the area and the scope for developing new community facilities to service the growing population. It is a shame that there was not more information at the exhibition, which was almost exclusively housing-focussed. The school understands the statutory framework in which a local plan has to be developed, and sympathises with the difficulties this causes the planning authority in terms of identifying development sites as a first stage in the process. However, the overriding response from our school is that this new wave of Government housing allocations – on top of a Plan so recently adopted by Fareham – requires a more joined-up process with other authorities from the outset.

We consider that for the housing plans to be credible or acceptable in our part of the Borough, there needs to be evidence that Hampshire County Council has already developed creative options for addressing the associated local traffic impacts and also a strategic vision for accommodating the increasingly fluid catchments of local schools. We do not understand how the public can be asked to support plans for housing which raise so many questions: it is not a 'fair' approach, in terms of public engagement, and could almost certainly be better managed by mounting shared exhibitions and presentations with the County, Environment Agency, key transport operators etc.

The Council's exhibition panels spoke of developer contributions to primary schools, but there was no mention of impacts on secondary schools like Brookfield – already one of the largest in the County. Indeed, planners at the exhibitions in Titchfield and Warsash seemed to think there would be no impacts on secondary provision in this area when asked by governors, and Cllr Woodward in his presentation at Warsash seemed to think any further expansion of Brookfield highly unlikely. We understand that Hampshire County Council is now arranging a means to work this through with all the schools in the new year, rather than entering discussions with schools on an

individual basis, but earlier discussions and shared thinking would have enabled us all to respond more confidently to parent concerns about catchment areas. This is particularly important given the uncertainty around schools funding, and the pressures on providing already for a diverse but highly aspirational student community.

However, the most significant concern for us and for our school is the impact of the new allocations on the levels of traffic and road safety. We are already in discussion with both Fareham and Hampshire about the alarming situation on Brook Lane – aggravated by the potential loss of crossing patrol officers and the inevitable debate about any kind of automated replacement. More traffic – especially from homes in Warsash - will only exacerbate this situation, affecting the wellbeing not just of our students but of all those who live, walk and cycle in the Sarisbury area. We cannot currently see a way that the housing developments can be mitigated by any improvements to residential roads, even if there are big plans afoot to boost the capacity of the nearby motorways.

So our response for now must be to object to the allocations proposed, essentially for the Greenaway Lane site, until we have greater reassurance that these can be accommodated through the provision of good quality, fit-for-purpose infrastructure including local roads and schools.

The Plan speaks of ‘preserving all that is good’, but we would wish to see the Plan being more ambitious – improving or enhancing what is currently good, and ensuring that development brings with it (as it has done in the case of Holly Hill Leisure Centre) positive contributions to the quality of life in an area which is in danger of losing its old village structure and becoming one large, urban sprawl. We teach our students about their local areas from Infant School upwards: reinforcing that sense of place and safeguarding a distinct identity for each of our neighbourhoods, are critical factors in developing the good citizens of tomorrow – those who will give back to their community like the volunteers at Holly Hill Park or the growing ‘Acts of Kindness’ Community, or the businesses that sponsor our football clubs and donate endless raffle prizes. We teach Citizenship at Brookfield, and the Local Plan provides the homes, employment sites and amenities for the next generation of Fareham citizens. We would ask that you use the Local Plan as a positive tool, and not simply a dry mechanism for meeting Government targets.

We wish you well in refining the Local Plan, following this consultation process, and would be happy to meet with any of the Fareham Borough Council officers or Members to elaborate on our response.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity.

Best wishes
Eloise Appleby

Brookfield Community School
Brook Lane,
Sarisbury Green
Southampton
Hampshire SO31 7DU