

# **SAVE BARTON FARM GROUP**

## **PRESENTATION TO WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 7 JANUARY 2009**

Mr Mayor and Councillors

The Save Barton Farm Group petitions Winchester City Council to protect Barton Farm from massive development, by omitting Barton Farm from the sites in the 2009 Preferred Options proposals for housing.

We were at the Buttercross last Saturday to inform the public and collect signatures for this petition. From the comments we received, it is obvious that the people of Winchester City and the surrounding District do not want this proposed massive development. On a freezing morning the warm support from the community added over 1,000 signatures to the petition. They cited the following concerns:

- Current and future economic climate
- Lack of infrastructure, particularly for traffic
- The impact any infrastructure solution of itself will have on Winchester
- Pollution and environmental issues, especially flooding
- Population and immigration issues  
and the most recurring theme
- Annihilation of the Winchester we know and love today

They realise the issue is much more complicated than merely acquiescing to a numbers game imposed by Central Government which I fear is currently the case.

However, to play that game for a moment, we have various facts and figures that support comments made on Saturday and make it crystal-clear to us that it is grossly premature to even be contemplating Barton Farm as a Preferred Option, because (just some examples):

- Planning Policy Statement 3 requires prioritisation of brownfield land for development
- Barton Farm was designated as a reserve strategic development area for the period of the Structure Plan (ie to 2011) after which it would be protected by Countryside Policy designation
- In 2007 the City Road/Andover Road junction was deemed by the Transport Assessment for HCC to be at capacity. Gridlock would result if the application for developing Barton Farm was accepted
- Winchester District has a history of Windfall sites exceeding identified sites – this rose to 75% in 2007-8. There is therefore a risk of vastly exceeding Regional housing requirement unless Windfalls are factored in

- Last month, the Annual Monitoring Report stated that "...completions are expected to exceed the Regional Spatial Strategy(RSS) housing requirement until the later stages of the plan"

and that

"The RSS requirement can be exceeded by the end of the Plan period".

Therefore, if the percentage of Windfalls historically achieved from 2000-2008 is factored in there can be no justification for the inclusion of this greenfield site in your Preferred Options Proposals.

There are lots more where this came from – but don't just take my word for it – nationally respected groups such as CPRE are 100% behind us on this very issue and have just issued a Press Release to this effect.

However, let's put the numbers game to one side now. The Local Development Framework covers 20 years – it is a short-term document. Do we really want to take the step change route for Winchester so it grows into an industrial powerhouse in the South?

I know from the numerous Council meetings I have attended, that some of you will shake your heads and say "this is all very well but we need to act responsibly" because we need to conform to the LDF process.

I beg to differ. Winchester is different and special and therefore has to be dealt with individually, without blanket planning proposals. Winchester needs and deserves a long term pro-active strategy to provide the Winchester that residents and the people of this country want.

We propose a long-term plan for Winchester to take full advantage of the things that make Winchester special – its history, culture, arts and unrivalled landscape setting. Of course this would need to address issues such as housing and employment but this should be done holistically as part of the long term, pro-active strategy.

Winchester is THE jewel in this Council's Crown and it is your privileged responsibility to ensure this jewel is not tarnished. We would welcome the opportunity to work with all political parties on the Council so any decisions you make is informed, based on true local responsibility, not expediency and half-truths.

We propose the Council set up a working party of interested groups to debate, plan and take pro-active action for the long-term future of Winchester and in the meantime omit Barton Farm from the Preferred Options proposed sites.

Thank you.

Gavin Blackman, Chairman – Save Barton Farm Group