

WHITELEY PARISH COUNCIL -PRESENTATION TO WCC
CABINET - MONDAY 10 JULY 2006

1. It is clear from the responses received from the recent City Council consultation that the residents of Whiteley want a school. What is even clearer is that 87% of those who replied do **not** want a school on the recreation land. Perhaps I should also add that the leaflet sent out by the County to all Whiteley residents was not generally well received, as it caused confusion, and even greater scepticism amongst many residents.

2. As we have previously stated there are many concerns locally about the effect the County proposals would have on the community, and in the continued absence of any information from the County Council, the Parish Council recently asked the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) to undertake a feasibility study on the Meadowside. The full report will not be available until the end of this month, but an interim one, which has already been forwarded to Cabinet, contains the main issues. Malcolm Miles from Hampshire NPFA will discuss these matters in his address to Cabinet this morning.

3. It is almost 12 months since the County Council proposal to use the Meadowside for a school was first mooted, and there is growing frustration within the Whiteley community that we are no further forward. At the public meeting early this year the

community was told “to take the existing County proposal or leave it as there is no plan B.” To the local community this demonstrated a complete lack of contingency and strategic planning, and little desire by the County to actually engage in consultation with all interested parties.

4. The Parish Council believes there is an alternative site in North Whiteley that should be pursued. We understand that this site does not present any technical planning difficulties because Policy C5 in the Winchester District Local Plan allows for sites for essential services such as education facilities that are outside an existing urban development envelope to be brought forward. The Parish Council cannot understand how the County and the Diocese can so easily dismiss this option without undertaking a detailed feasibility study. Those Cabinet members who have visited the site will know it is adjacent to the current development of houses off Dickens Drive. It is certainly not a remote site and is not divorced from existing essential infrastructure. We believe it may well offer a cheaper and better long-term solution for the Whiteley community and those residents who have clearly indicated their opposition to the use of the Meadowside support this view. This is one of the reasons why the Parish Council has asked Winchester City Council to commission an independent Environment Impact Assessment in order to address all the issues relating to the provision of a new school for Whiteley.

5. Cabinet will wish to be aware that opposition to the County Council proposal continues to grow within the community and since the recent consultation more than 350 residents have so far contacted the Parish Council and signed a petition opposing the use of the Meadowside land. It is our intention to submit this petition to the full Council on 19 July and being mindful that the overwhelming majority of respondents to the City Council's consultation are against using the Meadowside land for a new Primary School, we hope this Cabinet makes a recommendation to full Council **not to** sell the land to Hampshire County Council

6. Finally we are reminded of the City Council's core values, which guides the way in which the conduct of business is processed. The Council strives to be an organisation, which "listens to local people and takes full account of their wishes". Indeed for the Statement of Community Involvement, the Council has also identified some further values, which promote the involvement of local people and organisations in decision-making as this can lead to a change for the better.

7. Here is such a case where the community has given Cabinet a clear indication of their views. We need to remove Meadowside from the discussion now and move on quickly working together to provide the right school on the right site.