

WHITELEY PARISH COUNCIL PRESENTATION TO WINCHESTER CITY

COUNCIL CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2006

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. I would like to spend the next few minutes outlining the Parish Council's position regarding the current proposal by Hampshire County Council to build a one-form entry primary school using the Meadowside recreation land. While the Parish Council fully supports the need for a new Primary School in Whiteley, it remains opposed to the principle of using the Meadowside recreation land.

The Parish Council urges Cabinet to support the recommendation by the Director of Development **not to agree** to the disposal of land at Meadowside Recreation Ground to the County Council.

The current Hampshire County Council proposal would mean the unacceptable destruction of the only recreation space in Whiteley, it would cause considerable disruption to the area and would result in the loss of much used sports pitches for a considerable period of time. Despite the claim by Hampshire County Council that the Meadowside is the only site that can be developed within the given tight timescales there is a significant risk that their current proposal would be "called in" at the planning stage because its use would be a departure from present planning policy.

Since the public meeting chaired by Hampshire County Council last month, some of the sports teams who use the Meadowside pitches and also some residents have contacted the Parish Council. As a result we have received 2 petitions against the current Hampshire County Council proposal. These are in addition to the one from 70 school children which was handed to Madam Chairman last month. The first petition containing 220 signatures is from the members and parents of the 9 Whiteley Junior Football Teams and Whiteley Junior cricket Teams who are concerned about the loss of sports pitches. The second petition against the use of the Meadowside for a school contains 70 signatures, and is from some parents whose children attend the existing

Whiteley Primary School. With your permission Madam Chairman I shall now ask Nicki Oliver, the Parish Clerk to hand these to you.

Perhaps it would helpful if I explained that Whiteley Parish Council has consistently argued that there are other options including land in North Whiteley that should be pursued in order to achieve a better long term solution for the residents of Whiteley. With regard to the North Whiteley option it is our understanding that a 5-acre site close to existing residential housing together with land for an access road is available **now** at non-residential rates. While the proposed use of the Meadowside recreation land is a departure from Planning Policy, the land at North Whiteley is not because Winchester District Local Plan Policy C5 allows for sites for essential services such as education facilities which are out with an existing urban development envelope to be brought forward. The Parish Council **does not accept** that this option along with others should be so easily dismissed without a fully costed feasibility study being undertaken.

The option referred to in the Cabinet papers to relocate the 2 existing full size football pitches and a cricket square from Meadowside to Leafy Lane together with new changing and car parking facilities will need to be carefully considered. No site is without its difficulties, and the Parish Council recognises that The Hampshire County Council land at Leafy Lane is 1-2 km from 90% of the housing and is only accessible by crossing the main artery into Whiteley traversing a business park along a narrow residential road which already has more than 4000 vehicle movements a day.

Finally I would like to leave you with the following thoughts;

- ***A school on the Meadowside would change the character and urbanise an area which was built solely for recreation use.***

- *There would be major disruption to the area for a considerable period of time – the last school took 18 months from tender to occupation.*
- *There would be no sports activity on the recreation area for about 2-3 years.*
- *Other options including North Whiteley should be fully investigated and costed.*

MRE 22 Mar 06