

## 6. CHAPTER SIX - LEARNING

### 6.1 GENERAL

#### Representations

GOSE

L01-172/47-ID-O

#### Issue

- a. Whether the Learning Chapter makes adequate provision for improved accessibility by non-car modes of travel.

#### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.1.1 GOSE is concerned that the Plan does not reflect advice in Paragraph 38 of PPG 13. The guidance points out that education establishments are major travel generators and that proposals to develop or expand their facilities should aim to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling. Policies SDP 2- SDP 4 aim to ensure that development provides for a range of modes in order to offer a choice of travel and I have dealt with this issue under those policies. Paragraph 6.4 of the Revised Deposit version refers to School Transport Plans but GOSE's objection relates to higher education establishments as well. It seems to me that an addition to the supporting text at Paragraph 6.2 would be appropriate and satisfy the point made by the Objector.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**I recommend that the Plan be modified by deleting the final sentence in Paragraph 6.2 and replacing it with the following new sentences:**

***“Chapter Two promotes better and safer access to all education establishments through the Sustainable Transport policies. Proposals for the development or expansion of education establishments will need to demonstrate that improvements can be made to accessibility by non-car modes of travel, including public transport, walking and cycling. Chapter Five safeguards school playing fields as important leisure and natural resources”.***

### 6.2 POLICY L 1: SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

#### Representations

Hawthorne Kamm Planning Consultancy

L01-361/6-ID-O

## Issue

- a. Whether the policy should allow for surplus education land to be sold for redevelopment.

## Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

- 6.2.1 Hawthorne Kamm Planning Consultancy consider that provision should be made for schools to sell surplus land for development in order to fund necessary modernisation. I have dealt with the circumstances in which the loss of open space, including playing fields, may be permitted under Policy CLT 3<sup>1</sup>. Within the urban area of Southampton there is considerable competition for scarce land resources. It seems to me reasonable that school land should be safeguarded within the learning or community sector.
- 6.2.2 The Council has referred in its response to the School Organisation Plan<sup>2</sup> (SOP), which identifies spare capacity in both the primary and secondary school sectors. It suggests various means by which such capacity can be reduced, including allocating facilities for other education purposes, special needs or community service use. I consider that the third criterion of the policy supports this objective.
- 6.2.3 With regards to the funding of school improvements, it seems to me that there are a number of alternative options as mentioned in the SOP. I am not convinced that it is necessary to pursue the course of action suggested by the Objectors and I do not consider that the Policy should be changed to provide for this eventuality.

## RECOMMENDATION

**I recommend that no modification be made to the Plan in response to this objection.**

## 6.3 POLICY L 2: SCHOOL EXPANSION SITES

### Representations

Mr T Caves L02-1021/2-ID-O

Mr T Caves L02-1021/3-ID-O

### Issues

- a. Whether a site for a new secondary school should be identified.
- b. Whether a new primary school site should be identified in the city centre area.

## Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

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<sup>1</sup> See Paragraphs 5.3.8 and 5.3.9 of my Report.

<sup>2</sup> See Core Document CD17/4.

- 6.3.1 Mr Caves considers that a new site for a secondary school should be identified within the inner city area in order to accommodate children from new housing developments nearer to where they live. However, the SOP identifies a surplus in secondary school places in schools across the city and moreover the secondary school population is forecast to decline. Furthermore, it is expected that many of the new residential units will be flats and apartments, which will house relatively few children. In the circumstances I can find no justification for changing the Plan to accommodate this objection.
- 6.3.2 Mr Caves is also concerned about primary education and considers that a new primary school site should be identified in the vicinity of the new Andersons Road and Drivers Wharf residential developments. The SOP identifies a likely overall deficit in places within the city centre catchment although the level of demand seems uncertain for the reason I have given previously. If, as anticipated there is a shortfall of spaces within the city centre catchment this may be accommodated within adjoining areas where there is a surplus. The SOP envisages careful monitoring but does not recommend the need for a new primary school to serve the area at present. Clearly the situation can be reviewed and the Plan would not prevent a new primary school if the need arises.
- 6.3.3 With regards to the sites mentioned in Policy L 2, the Council has indicated that the intention is to improve facilities for existing pupils rather than to increase capacity.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**I recommend that no modification be made to the Plan in response to these objections.**

## **6.4 POLICY L 3: SURPLUS OR REDUNDANT SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

- 6.4.1 As there are no outstanding objections to this Policy, I make no further comment or recommendation.

## **6.5 POLICY L 4: NURSERY PROVISION**

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

- 6.5.1 As there are no outstanding objections to this Policy, I make no further comment or recommendation.

## 6.6 POLICY L 5: USE OF COMMERCIAL PREMISES FOR LEARNING

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.6.1 As there are no outstanding objections to this Policy, I make no further comment or recommendation.

## 6.7 POLICY L 6: SOUTHAMPTON INSTITUTE

### *(Proposed Change 79)*

### Representations

Southampton Institute	L06-572/7-ID-O
Southampton Institute	L06-572/20-RD-O
Southampton Institute	L06-572/23-RD-O

### Issue

- a. Whether the Plan adequately caters for the expansion of Southampton Institute.

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

- 6.7.1 The Plan supports the expansion plans of Southampton Institute and educational uses are included as part of the mixed-use development under Policy MSA 3. In the Initial Deposit version the expansion site was shown as a separate allocation but this was deleted at Revised Deposit stage. The Institute would like a site specific allocation re-instated adjacent to its existing campus and fronting onto St Andrews Road. It would also wish to be able to develop independently of the remainder of the MSA site and may be able to provide some of the community and health facilities within its development.
- 6.7.2 The Institute is an important educational provider and I consider that it should be able to plan for the future with the reasonable certainty that suitable land will be available to meet its needs. The Council and the Institute have agreed to a site allocation and also a form of wording for the policy and supporting text. This satisfies the Institute's objections as well as the Council's aspirations for the MSA 3 site. I support these proposed changes, which replace Proposed Change 79.
- 6.7.3 Reference has been made by the Council to a Development Brief prepared on behalf of the main landowners of the south western part of the MSA 3 site, the Southampton City Primary Care Trust and the Hampshire Ambulance

Trust<sup>3</sup>. Whilst the proposed change to Policy L6 would not appear to conflict with the land use principles in this document, as far as I can see it has no formal status as supplementary planning guidance. There appears to have been little, if any, public consultation and no official endorsement from the Council. In the circumstances I have afforded it very limited weight in my consideration of these objections.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that the Plan be modified as follows:

- ◆ By deleting the second criterion of Policy L6 and replacing it with the following new criterion:

*“Land to the north of the current campus at East Park terrace as part of the MSA 3 site”.*

- ◆ By designation the above site on the Proposals Map.
- ◆ By adding the following text before the third sentence in Paragraph 6.14 and making this into a separate paragraph:

*“The Institute wishes to expand to the north of its current campus at East Park Terrace. It requires a stand-alone site that adjoins its existing campus, as allocated by L6(ii), for development that creates a significant new frontage addressing St Andrew’s Road. The site will accommodate such uses as a new sports centre, new accommodation for the Student Union (combined with a Student Support Centre), a new studio complex to service media courses, performance space, lecture rooms and a visitors/ marketing suite. Should the Institute require further space to expand, Policy MSA 3.....”.*

I recommend that no modification be made to the plan in respect of Proposed Change 79.

## 6.8 PARAGRAPH 6.17

### Representations

East Bassett Residents Association

L07-18/4-ID-O

### Issue

- a. Whether the University Development Area (UDA) should be reviewed.

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.8.1 Government policy aims to increase the number of university places to allow more young people the chance to continue in higher education. I have no

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<sup>3</sup> See Core Document CD26/1.

doubt that student numbers at Southampton University will therefore continue to grow. This was predicted at the time of the previous Local Plan Inquiry (1994) when there was a forecast of about 15,000 students by about 2017. Since then the University has incorporated other sites and so overall numbers are far higher. However, even looking solely at the Highfield campus and adjacent sites, the numbers are already getting close to the 1994 predictions. In view of present government policy for 50% inclusion rates it seems to me likely that numbers will exceed the 1994 projections prior to 2017.

- 6.8.2 When supporting the “urban solution”, which entailed focussing development on the Highfield campus, the previous Local Plan Inspector concluded that it would be unsuitable for, and physically incapable of, accommodating more than the planned level of growth. The University will thus need to seriously consider how it is going to accommodate this additional growth prior to 2017. The Highfield site may well not be an acceptable option in view of its restricted capacity to accommodate further development and the residential character of the surrounding area.
- 6.8.3 It is clear that there are already problems of parking stress, traffic congestion and poor housing conditions and that local residents feel this is attributable to development at the Highfield campus and the large student population. However, at the moment I have no evidence that saturation point has been reached and that some further growth cannot be accommodated without unacceptable impacts arising. The previous Inspector considered that a long term strategy was essential to provide certainty for all concerned and I believe that it would be wrong for me to adopt a different approach at this stage.
- 6.8.4 Furthermore, I do not agree with Objectors that the UDA boundaries should be reviewed at the moment. They were widely debated at the 1994 Local Plan Inquiry and carefully examined by the Local Plan Inspector at the time. At that time there was considerable local objection to the inclusion of the allotments and the copse. Even though the surrounding area was recognised as being deprived and the allotments as being well used with a waiting list, the Inspector determined that these pieces of land should not be excluded from the UDA. I am not satisfied that there is any change of circumstance that would justify me reaching a different conclusion to that of my colleague.
- 6.8.5 Nos. 128-140 Burgess Road comprise a number of small houses, a public house and a convenience store. There is a designated local shopping centre a short distance to the east, which includes a variety of shops and services that would be available to meet local needs. I do not consider that there is good reason to exclude Nos. 128-140 from the UDA in response to this objection and I do not agree that the text should introduce uncertainty by saying that the UDA will be “subject to review”.
- 6.8.6 This is not to say that development by the University should disregard or override the amenities of those living within the surrounding residential area. This is a point made clearly by the previous Inspector and one which I reiterate. There are a number of policies in other parts of the Plan that will be relevant to the consideration of the University’s development proposals.

These will include the reasonable protection of living conditions but may also relate to matters such as highway safety, green transport<sup>4</sup> and nature conservation. It is important to remember that the Plan must be read as a whole and that cross-referencing is rarely satisfactory because it is inevitably selective and also makes for an unwieldy and repetitive document. I appreciate that Objectors consider that in the past their concerns have been inadequately considered. However, any failing in this regard seems to me most likely to be due to the proper implementation of Plan's policies rather than any intrinsic inadequacies in the policies themselves.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**I recommend that no changes be made to the Plan in response to this objection.**

## **6.9 POLICY L 7: THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

### ***(Proposed Changes 85 and 88)***

#### **Representations**

S Winteridge	L07-13/1-ID-O
Mr F J Dooley	L07-14/1-ID-O
Mr and Mrs Roberts	L07-42/1-ID-O
Mrs L Roberts	L07-54/1-ID-O
Hants & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust	L07-341/18-ID-O
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust	L07-362/2-ID-O
A Cartwright	L07-364/1-ID-O
Mr and Mrs R J Elliott	L07-418/1-ID-O
Mrs L Corner	L07-503/1-ID-O
Glebe Copse Bird Sanctuary and Nature Reserve	L07-563/1-ID-O
University of Southampton	L07-573/5-ID-O
University of Southampton	L07-573/6-ID-O
Mrs P K Fisher	L07-870/1-ID-O
J I White	L07-964/1-ID-O
Mr G M M Slater	L07-967/1-ID-O

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<sup>4</sup> Inspector's Note – See Paragraph 6.10.2 of my Report relating to the University's Green Transport Plan

## Issues

- a. Whether the policy provides adequate safeguards against detrimental impacts arising from future development within the Highfield Campus.
- b. Whether the UDA is appropriately defined and whether the Southampton General Hospital should be included and the Southampton Oceanography Centre excluded.
- c. Whether student accommodation should be permitted within the UDA.

## Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.9.1 Many people living in the Hilldown Road area immediately to the south of the Highfield Campus have raised objections about the effect of development on their properties. They raise concerns about land stability, drainage, noise, light pollution, visual impact and parking, amongst other things. However, these are all detailed matters that relate to existing uses as well as future development.

6.9.2 As I have already commented in the preceding section, a degree of further development by the University will be needed over the Local Plan period. It seems to me that the best way to achieve this is to ensure that it takes place in a planned way within an area specifically designated for the purpose. The Local Plan facilitates this and provides certainty for both the University and the local community. Individual development projects will require planning permission and will be subject to public consultation as well as scrutiny against the relevant policies of the Plan, including those in the Sustainable Development Chapter that relate to many of the matters of concern to local people.

6.9.3 Whilst there is a presumption that development proposals will be acceptable in principle within the UDA, this does not mean to say that blanket approval will be given regardless of circumstance. Mr Winteridge and others are concerned about the future of the Botanical Gardens and other undeveloped green spaces on the Highfield site. I agree that the landscaped setting is a very important feature and this is recognised in Paragraph 6.22 of the Plan. As the Council has pointed out, Policies SDP 12 and NE 4 would ensure that the environmental and ecological importance of these areas are recognised and respected.

### *The University Development Area (UDA)*

6.9.4 I have dealt with the issue of the UDA boundaries in the preceding section. I note the concerns of Mr and Mrs Roberts about the inclusion of 31-49 and 26-28 University Road. There are some, including Mrs Fisher, who consider that these properties should become a green buffer so that the University area is clearly separated and cannot further encroach on the adjoining residential area. However, the previous Local Plan Inspector considered this matter and he felt that the boundary was appropriately drawn. As I have said before it is important that certainty is provided and I can see no



justification for reviewing the UDA boundary as suggested by the Objectors.

- 6.9.5 The Southampton University Hospitals Trust (SUHT) consider that Southampton General Hospital should be included as one of the sites within the UDA. I agree that its importance in terms of teaching and research should be acknowledged in the Learning Chapter and I support Proposed Change 88, which adds appropriate wording to Paragraph 6.17 of the Plan. However, the hospital is a major regional centre for healthcare and I have supported Proposed Change 1, which in Paragraph 1.54 moves reference to the teaching hospital from the learning section of the Plan to the health and caring section<sup>5</sup>. Development at the hospital is covered by Policy HC 1 and I do not agree that the site should be included within the UDA as suggested by SUHT.
- 6.9.6 The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust consider that the Highfield Site includes a site that meets the criteria for SINC designation. This area is known as Glebe Copse and is a triangular area at the southern tip of the UDA. Although this was previously included in the UDA I note that the University supports its exclusion. It seems to me that, in view of its nature conservation importance, there is justification for this boundary revision. The Council deleted it from the UDA at Revised Deposit stage and designated it as a SINC instead.
- 6.9.7 Associated British Ports (ABP) consider that the Southampton Oceanography Centre (SOC) should not be included within the UDA. The Objectors point out that this land falls within the operational port with access through Dock Gate 4 and should therefore be designated, in common with the land surrounding it, under Policy REI 15. Whilst they do not object to uses within the first three criteria of Policy L 7, they say that they should only take place providing there is no conflict with port operations. ABP suggest amended wording to Paragraph 6.17 to make this clear and also to remove the site from the UDA on the Proposals Map.
- 6.9.8 The site occupied by the SOC was not designated for port related uses in the adopted Local Plan and there is no evidence that it will be needed for such purposes during the lifetime of the emerging Local Plan. It seems to me that the designation recognises the existing land use of the site and I consider that it should remain within the UDA. The criteria to Policy L 7 relate to acceptable uses within the UDA as a whole but that does not mean to say that every criterion will be applicable to every site. As ABP point out criterion five is site specific to the Highfield Campus only and will not apply to the SOC or other sites within the UDA. Criterion four may or may not be appropriate to the SOC but this would be a matter to consider in the event of a specific proposal coming forward.
- 6.9.9 I can though appreciate ABP's concerns that any development should not conflict with port operations and I consider that the wording suggested by them in this respect should be added to the text at Paragraph 6.17. I note the Council's comments but it seems to me that this part of the objection relates back to the representation submitted at Initial Deposit stage and is

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<sup>5</sup> See Paragraph 1.2.1 of my Report.

thus duly made.

6.9.10 The University of Southampton made a number of points at Initial Deposit stage that have been dealt with in the Revised Deposit version. These include reference to New College, reference to 286-294 (even) Broadlands Road and notation on the Proposals Map.

#### *Policy Criteria*

6.9.11 The Policy sets out the types of development that will be acceptable within the UDA. J I White is concerned about sporting facilities and night clubs but new proposals for such unrelated uses would not fall within the acceptable range of uses. The Council explains in its response to Mr Cartwright's objection that incubator units enable links between academic research and commercial development. The policy requires that academic needs are not prejudiced and with this proviso incubator units seem to me to be appropriate within the UDA.

6.9.12 The University of Southampton have pointed out that Clarkson House, as referred to in Paragraph 6.20 of the Plan, has been granted planning permission to change its use to a nursery. Proposed Change 85 deletes this reference and also replaces the term "disabled students" with "students with special needs" to reflect the wording in the policy itself. I support this proposed change.

6.9.13 The University object to criterion four of the policy on the basis that it is too inflexible to restrict student accommodation in this way. I do not agree. It seems to me that one of the advantages of the "urban solution"<sup>6</sup> is that the academic facilities will be easily accessible to students living elsewhere in the city. I have already mentioned the importance of the environmental context when considering development within the UDA and it is clear that the land available for expansion will therefore be relatively restricted. Whilst accommodation for those with special needs who require proximity to the teaching facilities is reasonable, more widespread student accommodation within the UDA would be inappropriate. I note that a similar line is taken in the adopted Local Plan. Clearly if there were to be "exceptional circumstances" as suggested by the University, these could be considered on their individual planning merits and as an exception to the Plan.

6.9.14 The University have also objected at Initial Deposit stage to the wording in criterion five of the policy concerning the position of the road link. This was changed in the Revised Deposit version and it appears from subsequent representations by the Objector that the points have been satisfactorily answered.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**I recommend that the Plan be modified in accordance with Proposed Changes 85 and 88 and as follows:**

◆ **By adding the following text after sentence one of Paragraph 6.17:**

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<sup>6</sup> See Paragraph 6.8.2 of my Report.

***“The Southampton Oceanography Centre is located within, and shares an access with, the operational area of the Port of Southampton. In this area land uses will be permitted provided they are compatible with the needs of the operational port”.***

## **6.10 POLICY L 8: BROADLANDS ROAD & GRANBY GROVE**

### **Representations**

Councillor Samuels

L08-1213/9-ID-O

### **Issues**

- a. Whether the policy would encourage unacceptable traffic generation.
- b. Whether there should be designated parking areas for buses.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.10.1 Councillor Samuels refers to the loss of the allotments and the copse and I have dealt with this matter along with the UDA boundary in Paragraph 6.8.3 of my Report above. Policy L 8 requires a landscaped buffer along the Broadlands Road frontage of Nos. 171-185 (odd) and prohibits vehicular access into the main campus at this point. This was a recommendation of the previous Local Plan Inspector and was a requirement of Policy ED10 in the adopted Local Plan. There is provision for access from Broadlands Road further to the north. This was included in Policy ED9 in the adopted Local Plan and has been reiterated as the fifth criterion in Policy L 7. I doubt that this would be particularly useful as a “rat run” as suggested by Councillor Samuels and I see no convincing reason why it should not be carried forward into the emerging Plan.

6.10.2 Councillor Samuels is also concerned about on-street parking and traffic pressure. This is a complaint raised by other Objectors, including the East Bassett Residents Association<sup>7</sup>. Development proposals will be subject to the sustainable development policies in the Plan including Policy SDP 3 relating to travel demand. The University have developed a Green Transport Plan, which has been agreed with the Council. This is an initiative that provides a framework for improvements to travel provision in connection with development by the University. It can be added to or amended if necessary to take account of future proposals in the UDA.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**I recommend that no modifications be made to the Plan in response to this objection.**

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<sup>7</sup> See Paragraph 6.8.3 of my Report.

## **6.11 POLICY L 9: AVENUE CAMPUS**

### **Representations**

Uplands Estate Houseowners Association

L09-469/1-ID-O

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.11.1 Policy L9, along with its supporting text, has been deleted from the Revised Deposit version of the Plan. Accordingly I make no comment on the representation by The Uplands Estate Housing Association or any recommendation on this policy.