

## **BASINGSTOKE & DEANE LOCAL PLAN ENQUIRY 20 OCTOBER 2015**

### **MANYDOWN DISCUSSIONS**

1 BDBC in this plan seems not to have any policy of contour line development and to disregard the setting of B'stke town in a bowl with the watershed chalk downland of Farleigh Hill through Battledown to the edge of Wootton St Lawrence to the south east and west. This ridge forms the chalk link between the North Downs AONB of the Hog's Back east of Farnham to the North Wessex Downs AONB which extends close to Malshanger and WSL just west of the proposed development site. As a watershed it divides areas where surface water flows to the Loddon then to the Thames and the North Sea from those areas west and south where water flows into the English Channel via the Test, Candover/Itchen valleys. Without this policy in place development has been allowed to spread, not within its natural topographical boundaries, but to man made boundaries like the M3 and Roman Road. The Hatch Warren and Beggarwood developments can now be seen from miles around and show a serious lack of sensitive development on chalk downland which often has very little tree cover. This has had a detrimental effect on the cohesion of B'stke town which now extends four to five miles south west of the town centre yet less than two miles on the south east side of the town centre. I have no strong objection in principle to the Manydown development but it does need to better reflect and take account of the geographical situation of the site. I would urge those involved to incorporate a ban on development above the 130 metre contour line thereby retaining as open space those areas close to Worting Wood farm (ref 603530) and between Newfound and Wootton SL (ref 589523) which afford some of the most wide ranging views of the area west of B'stke and would limit visual damage viewing the area from the south eastern parts of the NWD AONB.

2 In their formulation of Manydown for development in the Plan BDBC needs to give some assurance to communities west of the area that their access to B'stke would not be jeopardized by a lack of vision in respect of infrastructure changes, especially to the road network. Access to work and leisure venues in B'stke town has tended to get slower in recent decades as communities such as Oakley, Overton and Whitchurch have grown but more especially with developments on the west side of the town such as the Leisure Park and large housing estates. The Manydown development could make access to B'toke even slower and alter people's opinion of the advantages of the town's facilities to residents in the west of the borough. If Manydown blocks us off from easy access to the town then many will take their business, leisure and seek work elsewhere. Ensuring bus lanes were incorporated might help but getting buses to queue in the same jam as cars will NOT encourage any change of transport type by local residents.

3 Finally, a matter which may be of small concern to the council but is a major piece of social and industrial history for the borough. The proposed western

edge of the Manydown development abuts the Battledown flyover where the London to Southampton railway line divides from that to Salisbury and Exeter. This site has the highest elevation on the line between London and Southampton at 365' above sea level, the same height as the cross on top of St Paul's Cathedral in London, and has been a mecca for photographers of railways since it was built. It might seem a little far fetched but this piece of railway engineering is north Hampshire's equivalent of the Ribbleshead viaduct on the Settle and Carlisle line or Brunel's Saltash bridge spanning the Tamar - no other site hereabouts is photographed more. These things matter to a section of the population and any development boundaries should consider the context of that flyover placed right on the watershed in the midst of arable farmland.

Thank you.

Brian Langer  
Overton