

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy

Filton Airfield Position Statement June 2011

Response from CPRE South Gloucestershire District

1) Do you agree that the Core Strategy should take account of the impending closure of Filton Airfield? If not, why not?

CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) South Gloucestershire District agrees that the closure of Filton Airfield is of such strategic importance to the Core Strategy (CS) that proposals for its future development should be incorporated into the CS.

2) Which of the 3 options do you consider is the correct approach to take in the Core Strategy? If none of the options, what approach do you consider should be followed instead?

We agree with the headline proposal to identify Filton Airfield as a development opportunity in the CS. Given the huge potential of the site, this is a major opportunity to shape, in a considered and well planned manner, a vibrant, well designed and sustainable environment which enhances the surrounding area.

However we are firmly of the opinion that this site should be incorporated into the CS **instead of** the Green Belt site currently identified in the CS to the East of Harry Stoke and the contingency site post 2020 to the West of the A4018 (Policy CS5). We consider that this approach would offer a far more sustainable strategy for the North Bristol fringe area.

We agree with the conclusion reached by South Gloucestershire Council on the feasible level of sustainable housing provision over the lifetime of the LDF. Given the possibility of the airfield site providing 3,000-3,500 dwellings, in addition to capacity for employment, this would more than compensate for the 2,000 dwellings proposed for the site East of Harry Stoke.

We argued against including this latter site in our original submission to the CS consultation. Since that time there has been growing public awareness both of the intrinsic value of natural open spaces and the vital role that the Green Belt plays, together with increased concern for issues of food security and the important role played by local food provision.

We would argue that replacing the site East of Harry Stoke with the Filton Airfield site would

- Give greater credence to the statements in the CS about the value of South Gloucestershire's green infrastructure, particularly the Green Belt as well as the claim in the Filton Airfield Position Statement (paragraph 38) that the airfield would provide

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“additional capacity to meet employment and housing needs without using Green Belt land.” ^{The}

- Preserve an area currently used for agricultural purposes on the outskirts of Bristol. The recently published and well-received report “Who feeds Bristol?” (Bristol City Council, March 2011) stresses the need for a resilient food plan for the city which protects the local food supply. It refers (14.1) to “productive green infrastructure” where green spaces “can function as green corridors linking the city with its rural surroundings”. Given South Gloucestershire’s own strategy for local food provision it would seem perverse to ignore the opportunity to substitute a brownfield city site for a productive green agricultural site.
- Prevent further “urban sprawl” on the North Fringe of Bristol which would destroy a strategic “green finger” within the area bordered by motorways and the A4174 ring road, leaving just a token patch of Green Belt to the south of the ring road.
- Ensure that brownfield development would take precedence and provide the opportunity to focus on robust proposals for a carefully balanced, well integrated development within the city boundaries.

We do not believe that such an approach would jeopardise the proposed North Fringe Rapid Transit Link (which could itself more logically follow the route of the existing motorway/ring road corridor without major encroachment across the Green Belt).

3) With Option 3, do you agree that the detail of any development proposals should be set out in subsequent plans - namely the Sites, Policies and Places Development Plan Document and supporting Supplementary Planning Document - providing a further and more detailed opportunity for extensive community involvement in their preparation? If not, what approach do you consider should be followed instead?

We agree that the detail of development proposals should be clearly set out in relevant DPDs and SPDs. However given the time scale of the production of such documents and the need for extensive community involvement and consultation, the CS itself needs to give strong guidance on the “vision” and process for the development of the site and the need for an integrated approach to the entire site in order to avoid piecemeal development as soon as the site becomes available.

4) Do you have any comments on the suggested policy and text wording and figure changes to the Core Strategy set out in Appendix 1?

In accordance with our comments under question 2, we would wish to see references to development on land East of Harry Stoke to be deleted, as well as the statement in 4.14 about reviewing the Green Belt designation of land west of the A4018. Similar amendments need to be made to Figure 5.

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We can see no reason for the complete deletion of paragraph 12.17. We would wish to see the importance recognised of using land “innovatively for new allotments, species rich grassland and hedgerows, woodland, sports pitches and informal open space” within the new development area. Only the words “at the end of and adjacent to the runway” need deleting. This paragraph could then be moved to section 12.19

We consider that given the great sense of community in the “urban villages” of Bristol and South Gloucestershire, such as Hanham, Whitchurch, Westbury on Trym or Mangotsfield, there is a great opportunity to re-establish Charlton Village which was demolished in order to build the runway. We would therefore like to see a reference in the Policy to the aim of establishing a new “village” within the development area with its own special sense of identity and stand alone facilities and infrastructure.

We would wish to see a more clearly stated commitment to working closely with Bristol City Council because of the complex relationship which this area has with the infrastructure of the neighbouring administrative area. This would also conform with emerging government guidelines on this issue.

5). Would you like to request to appear at the Examination in relation to any comments you submit on the Position Statement?

CPRE South Gloucestershire District would be pleased to be invited to attend the Examination in relation to our comments

6) Any other comments?

We consider that the Filton Airfield site offers a huge opportunity for South Gloucestershire to develop a well planned and integrated, diverse but sustainable “future proofed” community and to demonstrate its firm commitment to the aspirations of the Core Strategy in this respect. However this will require a robust approach in order to pre-empt hasty piecemeal and ad hoc development.

We recognise the importance of an adopted Core Strategy being put in place as soon as possible, but we also hope that the potential of this site will allow for a rethink about the overall future for the North Bristol fringe and particularly for its much threatened remaining large open spaces.

Jill Kempshall
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25.7.2011

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