



June 12, 2012

Sent by email

Mr. Alistair Cunningham,
Service Director, Economy and Regeneration,
Wiltshire Council,
County Hall,
Trowbridge,
Wiltshire BA14 8JN

Dear Mr. Cunningham,

Wiltshire Core Strategy – Core Policy (23) Old Sarum Airfield

I have been informed that representations have been made against Core Policy 23 incorporated into the pre-submission Wiltshire Core Policy by Councillor McLennan and representatives from the parish council.

The representations contain material factual inaccuracies which I would like to correct.

Most of these inaccuracies are in the representation by Mr Hannath (ID: 541025) which are repeated by Mr Hannath and Mr Champion (ID: 392686).

5.119

“Old Sarum Airfield is the second oldest and best preserved, continuously operational aerodrome in the United Kingdom”

This is a false statement; Old Sarum was one of 64 Training Depot Stations (TDS) built in the period 1914 to 1917. Old Sarum was opened in 1916 at the same time as nearby Boscombe Down which was also originally a TDS. Other nearby airfields that pre-date Old Sarum are Netheravon and Upavon. Of the airfields opened during this period 29 have been continuously operated and are currently operational.

“It is also recognised as being the only such aerodrome with its perimeter largely intact and therefore unspoilt by intrusive development.”

This statement is contradicted by Mr Hannath and Mr Champion in their next paragraph; *“The planning enablers granted...instead led to continuous planning permissions which have been implemented to date. There is no reason to believe that **further erosion of the perimeter** and its intrusion into the runway, would make things better.*

This very substantial industrial development has encroached on nearly all of the northern perimeter of the airfield and has totally compromised the setting of the listed hangars in the context of the airfield as a whole such that all that remains is the relationship between the hangars and the flying field – one key objective of core policy 23 is to preserve and enhance this. To the south of the airfield adjacent to Ford the modern housing that has been built, including Merrifield Road, has changed the character of the

original MOD housing to one of a “1980s housing estate” which has obscured the original relationship between the original housing and the airfield.

The impact on the airfield was recognised when the boundaries of the conservation area were defined and this modern development built on the airfield was excluded.

5.120

“The late 20th century intrusion mentioned, was led by Salisbury District Council, in its desire to assist Edgley Aircraft in developing the doomed Optica Aircraft.”

This is an incorrect statement. The industrial development stemmed from the sale of the land which is now the South Portway Industrial Park by the MOD in 1987. Edgley Aircraft went into receivership in 1985 and planning permission for the re-development of the site of the hangar destroyed by fire together with surrounding land was not given until 1990. This became the Castlegate Industrial Park.

“In the past, the Flying Club has reduced the number flying the circuit, in response to these complaints.”

There has been no Flying Club at the airfield since 2007 when Blanefield, the airfield owners, took over operations at the airfield. It is Blanefield that has voluntarily reduced the number of airfield movements from nearly 7000 during September 2007 to just over 4000 in September 2011 (a 40% reduction). It is also Blanefield that has sought to limit nuisance by discouraging noisier aircraft types and carefully managing the circuit pattern flown by aircraft using the airfield. Clearly this reduction in flying activity has a pro-rata reduction in income and a significant financial impact. Blanefield has been prepared to bear this to maintain good neighbourly relations as it works with the Council to implement the benefits to all of Core policy 23.

“There is also an early evening flying cut off via the Airfield CAA licence, which is the proper controlling authority, rather than meddling planners.”

This is incorrect. The airfield is licensed to operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year providing the licensing requirements are met. The CAA licence controls operational aspects of the airfield such as the provision of Airfield Fire and Rescue services it does not regulate the hours of operation.

5.121

“Given all of the comments above, you will realise that we have no sympathy for planners who seem to make agreements with developers behind our back without reference to any of our parish’s elected representatives.”

Core Policy 23 is the incorporation into the Wiltshire Core Strategy of Core Policy 9 of the Adopted South Wiltshire Core Strategy. This was developed over many years with open dialogue with all local representatives before it was included into the draft strategy. It was then subject to full consultation (in fact twice due to the intervention of Councillor McLennan) and the full scrutiny of the strategy development and approval process. Core policy 9 was positively endorsed in all respects by the South Wiltshire Core Strategy inspector.

“The proposed “Enabler” in the Northwest would force the loss of the original runway strip and a new one developed, which seems incredulous to us, that anyone could think that the loss of the unique 100 year flying history, on that strip is acceptable.”

The current runway strip is not *“the original runway strip”* it was only defined when the airfield was first licensed by the CAA in 1987. For many years there were two parallel runway strips – one used by powered aircraft and one by gliders. When maintenance work is being undertaken on the licensed (powered) strip the gliding strip is used for powered flying. This is normal practice on grass airfields.

More importantly, the original flying field was focused upon a circle based on the relatively flat ground in front of the hangars. Aircraft in 1916 had to take off into wind and had a very short take off run – the flying field was therefore, just that, an area where aircraft took off and landed in whichever direction was safest in accordance with the wind direction. The plans for the flying field are available and have been included in the draft conservation area management plan prepared by Blanefield. There will be no intrusion into the flying field under Core Policy 23.

I would be grateful if you would ensure that these corrections are included with the submissions made by Messrs. Hannath, Champion and McLennan.

Yours sincerely,

Grenville Hodge

cc

Councillor Toby Sturgis - Cabinet Member for Waste, Property, Environment and Development Control Services
Maggie Wood – DPDS Ltd.