

Dear Cllr. Burnell,

Old Sarum Airfield

Thank you for your letter dated 17th September and the attached schedule of comments on the Conservation Plan.

Your comment in the first paragraph of your letter is incorrect. There is no requirement for the plan to be developed in consultation with the Parish council and the local member for Wiltshire Council. Notwithstanding this fact we have worked hard to involve the Parish Council and the local member in the development of the plan. We met members of the Parish Council and the local member at the airfield on the 5th September 2012 and gave an in depth explanation of our plans for the airfield, the investment we had made in the draft Conservation Management Plan and our proposals for completing this work. We made it clear that we would welcome both the Parish Council and the local member to participate in both our proposals for the airfield and the development of the Conservation Management Plan. I arranged additional copies to be printed and provided to the Parish Council and the local member following this meeting.

I have met members of the Parish Council and the local member on numerous occasions over the last few years and have always taken care to explain to them our plans and to invite them to participate in the work we were undertaking to develop the Conservation Management Plan.

On the 19th September 2013, I met the Parish Council and the local member at the community farm together with Kim Slowe the Managing Director of ZeroC Holdings Co. an award winning green developer which does much of its work with The Prince's Trust. We explained the process we would adopt in arriving at a plan for the regeneration of the airfield and part of the discussion included our proposal to develop the Conservation Management Plan to include a document that would outline specific actions to sustain and enhance the conservation area. The document (rev11) you refer to in your letter is a working copy of this. Again we asked that the Parish Council and the local member work with us in developing this plan and also invited the Parish Council members and the local member to a two day Enquiry by Design ("EBD") meeting which was held at the airfield to consult with and obtain input from the local community prior to any plans being developed for the airfield. The Parish Council refused to attend the EBD sending only the Parish Clerk, Mr Prince, as an observer. Disappointingly, the local member, Cllr McLennan, advised members of the public not to participate in this opportunity to shape the future of the airfield.

From the above you will see that we have gone out of our way to seek to involve the Parish Council and the local member in the development of the Conservation Area Management Plan.

The first sentence of your second paragraph is also incorrect. As explained above the "another important document" you refer to was provided to the Parish Council and the local member in September 2012. Your further comments are also incorrect and ill-informed. The whole document is concerned with the sustainability of the airfield. We have been working for nearly 20 years, meeting the annual losses, to maintain flying at Old Sarum. The business plan for the airfield and the management of aircraft noise are not issues for a Conservation Area Management Plan. The language of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) which is the current legislation uses the word sustain not preserve as preserve is seen as a backward looking negative mindset whilst sustain is forward looking and proactive. Preservation is part of the toolkit which can be used.

I have attached a summary written by Hugh Feilden on the development of the Conservation Area Management Plan from which you will see that the starting point for the Plan was a critique of the

Atkins report in 2006. Your further points simply attempt to re-open the debate leading up to the core policy in the Local Development Framework. This was an extensive democratic process involving extensive consultation and in which the Parish Council and the local member made substantial comment. The review by the LDF inspector endorsed the soundness of the policy and the conclusion of his report firmly supports the policy and rejects the late amendment proposed by Cllr McLennan.

“197.All three of the potential development areas identified in the CS have the potential to help ease the longstanding issues of noise and unsightly development which affect Old Sarum Airfield. No major changes are, therefore, needed to this policy to make it sound. The change proposed by the Council has, therefore, been deleted from Annex 1.”

You state that the draft document contains many inaccuracies and confusing statements and these have been noted on your Table. None of the comments in your table identify inaccuracies or confusing statements. It comprises unsubstantiated statements, uninformed comment and opinions. I do not intend to respond to these directly and as you are by now most probably aware the document has been updated to take account of further work and consultations.

I am pleased that you have seen the concept drawings we have produced which we believe provide a very firm foundation for the long term regeneration of the airfield; substantial improvement to and use of the heritage assets; an imaginative development in the northwest corner of the airfield which will provide homes for people who would wish to be part of the overall airfield community; and a sensitive development to the southwest which will take its cues from the original arts and craft MOD housing. All of the issues you identify will of course be investigated and form part of the planning application we propose submitting around the turn of the year.

We will consult widely on our proposals and we would like to work constructively with the Parish Council to produce an outcome for which we can all be justly proud. We are concerned that the negative actions towards operations at the airfield of the Parish Council and Mr. McLennan are insincere to the extent that they masquerade as being concerned for the continuation of flying when they are in fact against continued use of Old Sarum Airfield and are prepared to say or write anything that furthers their agenda. On the other hand we are committed to preserving the heritage and enhancing the flying operations in a way which is not intrusive. In more than 20 years no one has raised a hand to assist us to continue the loss-making flying and thereby preserve the heritage of this important site. Moreover our plans are to use the excess land, which currently has no use, to create attractive well-built housing with appropriate amenities so that the nearest neighbours in future will be those persons who have chosen to live adjacent to this important historic airfield.

Yours sincerely

Grenville Hodge

Director
Old Sarum Airfield Ltd