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BAAG BLASTS MASTERPLAN

BAAG has delivered a searing condemnation of East Hampshire District Council's masterplan for Whitehill Bordon issued in June. The consultation period, only held over the summer holidays and closed on 3 September is just a box-ticking token, they say. Most disturbing, is that, despite taking over six months to respond to detailed criticism received during the Council's previous round of consultation in 2009, there is no material change. This simply confirms BAAG's view that the real objective of the plan was always predetermined- to pack 'surplus' MoD land with as many houses as possible, disregarding the fact that most of it consists of green areas which should remain as open space.

BAAG Chairman Steve Parsons commented: "The plan's 'green credentials' are in tatters. The so-called supporting evidence doesn't support it. Among other faults, there is no completed transport study, no traffic figures, no means of attracting new jobs or shops, no means of addressing increased travel demand and no means of avoiding harm to protected wildlife areas. There will be building over parts of Hogmoor Inclosure. Most ridiculous, farmland outside Bordon will be developed to compensate for building on green sites in the town. People from the new housing areas will be expected to travel to it. This is just more of the same incompetence we have suffered for years- a recipe for a huge, high density dormitory suburb, the total opposite of green planning, including high carbon generation, unfundable retrofitting and infrastructure."

Parsons condemned the Council's continuing waste, paying out of millions for unworkable ideas, damaging schemes and empty promises that require massive public subsidy. "Recent Government cuts in funding for eco-town projects underscore how impractical this plan really is" he said, adding that "The Council's own figures for the consultation response, which we had to fight to get, showed the majority of even the few who responded do not support the scheme. Our own figures show overwhelming opposition."

Parsons also commented on the shock announcement this week of Council Leader David Parkinson's resignation. "This illustrates the disarray, lack of continuity, involvement and knowledge within the Council's leadership. The Whitehill Bordon community does not support this plan and has no confidence in its promoters. The same discontent will stalk the new Leader. The situation calls for an investigation of the Council's colossal spending and how they briefed their consultants on this project. We continue to press for a fundamental rethink of the plan."

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