

PORTSMOUTH – MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION

Why we consider the area appropriate for designation as a Neighbourhood Planning area.

Local residents believe that proposals for developments in the area, especially those relating to unsustainable housing allocations for the St James's Hospital site and the University of Portsmouth Furze Lane campus, present a threat to the character of the area. In particular, these proposals, including recent planning applications, would lead to an imbalanced community lacking in appropriate social and community facilities. Their views have been expressed in a variety of ways including objections to planning applications, representations to elected members of the City Council and one of the area's Members of Parliament, a demonstration in the grounds of the hospital, attendance at Milton Neighbourhood Forum and other public meetings and the creation of a *Keep Milton Green* Facebook Group with over 950 members.

The Urban Characterisation Study (Portsmouth City Council 2011) accurately describes the character of Milton East and the part of Milton West that is included in the Plan area, as follows.

(Extract from) Introduction

3.453 The only substantial buildings within the area at the time (1910) were located at the City Mental Hospital, now known as St. James' Hospital. Originally set in extensive landscaped grounds, development towards the end of the 20th century has significantly reduced its size however large areas of pleasant open space still remain.

3.454 Milton Common located to the north was formally part of Langstone Harbour and known as Milton Lake. Landfill across the area up until the 1970s created additional landmass, which now forms a Local Wildlife Site and an essential recreational area for people living in the Milton and Baffins character areas.

3.455 Today, the range of quality residential properties and the generally quiet suburban character attracts a broad range of social groups to the neighbourhood and is particularly popular with young families and older people.

Land use

3.456 The area has a range of land uses throughout. Residential properties dominate to the west with large spaces to the east. St. James' Hospital covers a considerable area at the heart of Milton East, however, its size has been reduced significantly over the past ten years as parts have been released for development. There are a number of community facilities scattered across the area including schools community centres, churches, meeting rooms and a small local centre located along Locksway Road.

3.457 Milton East has a generally quiet character both during the day and the evening with the exception of Milton Road where a number of shops are located. Whilst Fratton Park, home of Portsmouth Football Club, is in the neighbouring character area of Milton West, the influx of supporters into the city on match days has a significant effect on Milton East.

3.458 Incremental development across the area over an extended period of time has created a mix of building types and styles throughout. Initial development to the west created the most consistent townscape in the area, with 2 storey terraces laid out in grid pattern. Narrow roads dominated by parked vehicles and few breaks in the building line create a more enclosed feeling than the series of estates to the north.

3.459 A mix of low density estates constructed after 1960 extend along Moorings Way. While architectural styles vary between each individual development, the general pattern of modest 2 storey dwellings, either semi-detached or set in short terraces, situated within the centre of their plots, with small rear and front gardens / driveways is fairly consistent. Most are set within small leafy and open estates served by curvilinear routes feeding cul-de-sacs and short loops.

3.482 (Milton West) Residential uses are located predominantly to the north-west and south-east of the area, separated by a hospital and commercial uses. (It is the south-eastern residential area that is proposed to form part of the Milton Neighbourhood Plan area.)

Landscape and open space

3.460 Predominantly flat the eastern boundary is formed by Langstone Harbour, leaving coastal areas fairly exposed to the elements. Residential neighbourhoods are set back from the coastline and as such, their proximity to the sea does not form an obvious characteristic of these areas.

3.461 The coastline does, however, provide pleasant walking and cycling routes and panoramic views out across Langstone Harbour to Hayling Island and northern parts of the city. Large areas of open space are an obvious characteristic of the area providing a range of recreational facilities for residents and visitors to the area. Bransbury Park to the south contains a range of sports pitches, a community centre, play areas and a model railway, and the city's largest allotment site is located just to the east of it. Milton Common, University Sports pitches, leafy landscaped grounds at the hospital and large cemetery provide the majority of other open spaces and contribute to general open character of the neighbourhood.

3.494 Milton Park provides the only significant area of public open space in the (Milton West) area. This triangular park includes tennis courts, bowling greens, skate ramps, a children's play area, formal

gardens and a grassed recreational space all in a pleasant leafy setting. The park is popular and well used by people from the adjoining residential areas. (Milton East and the eastern part of the Devonshire Avenue ADC of Southsea East.)

Areas of distinct character

3.471 Old Milton – the first part of the neighbourhood to be significantly developed at the turn of the 20th century and is formed by neat terraced properties in a rigid grid pattern (53dph). Later infill developments are located throughout with larger buildings restricted to the Milton Road Frontage. The development pattern creates a slightly more enclosed feeling throughout, although large areas of open space are within close proximity. Busy traffic along Eastern Road and Milton Road is a negative characteristic and the use of side roads as ‘rat runs’ has led to the introduction of traffic calming measures on many routes.

3.472 Bransbury – large areas of public open space provided by Bransbury Park and allotments adjoining Langstone Harbour. These facilities provide an important break in the built form and provide essential recreational facilities for residents across the city. A small 1960s housing estate divides the two areas and a coastal footpath affords views across the harbour. The last surviving remnants of the Portsea Canal are located in a small conservation area to the north-west (16dph).

3.473 St. James’ – St. James’ Hospital, including its Grade II listed main building and extensive landscaped grounds, cover the majority of this area. The Langstone Campus of the University of Portsmouth is located to the east of the area and a 13 storey block of student halls represents the tallest building on the eastern side of Portsea Island. The area has a pleasant open character adjoining Langstone Harbour, however, the remote location does mean that the small scale residential development located there are some distance from any significant local amenities.

3.474 Moorings Way Area – a mix of low density (38dph) post war residential estates consisting of modest detached / semidetached properties and short rows of terraced properties. Each is clearly distinguishable in style, reflecting the extended period of time over which this area has grown. Larger 4 storey blocks of flats set in communal grounds are located along the Eastern Road frontage. Located on a series of loops and cul-de-sacs, front gardens / driveways setting properties back from the road, create a pleasant open character throughout.

3.475 Milton Common – this former landfill site now largely comprising rough grassland and ponds, supports important botanical species and provides vital habitat to wildlife. It forms part of a larger chain of green open spaces that extends along the eastern coastline of Portsea

Island. A coastal path provides views across Langstone Harbour to Hayling Island and a cycle path provides an important north-south route for commuters and recreational users.

3.508 Priory Crescent (Milton West) – a mix of 2 storey terraced residential properties dating from between 1895 and 1938 with later infill developments and a large park on the site of Milton Farm. Traffic calming measures have largely confined traffic to the main roads leaving side streets relatively quiet. Pedestrian movement swells when matches are held at the adjoining football stadium (46dph).

Why we consider the proposed forum to be a relevant body for the purposes of neighbourhood planning

The proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions contained in Section 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011, Schedule 9) for the following reasons, and is therefore capable of being a relevant body for the purposes of neighbourhood planning (Section 61G of the 1990 Act)

- The Forum has been set up with the purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area designated and to conserve and enhance the green and spacious character of the locality as described in the Portsmouth City Council Planning Document Urban Characterisation Study.
- Membership has been made open to people living or working in the area, and elected members for the area.
- There are in excess of 21 members from above groups.
- The proposed Forum has a Written Constitution.

Engagement with the Community to Date

There exists already in the area an active neighbourhood forum (in addition to this proposed Neighbourhood Planning Forum) which produces a local magazine, *Milton Matters*. This magazine is distributed to all homes within its area. That forum also holds regular open meetings with residents at which views can be gathered. It attempted to create a Neighbourhood Planning Forum in 2012 and considerable progress was made at that time, when their consultations showed that people living in the area readily regard Milton as their locality, sharing its problems and opportunities.

The current proposal began as a question to representatives of the Local Planning Authority at one of those regular open meetings in September 2014. Since then, the intention to form a neighbourhood planning forum and requests for members and assistance with the forum have been made at a further open meeting of the neighbourhood forum, in the January 2015 edition of *Milton Matters* and in posts to the Keep Milton Green Facebook Group.

On 28 February 2015 the Secretary wrote to Fiona Bell, Director of Estates at the University of Portsmouth and to Nicola Booth, Acquisitions & Disposals Manager of NHS Property Services, advising them of the proposed Planning Forum and offering a point of contact for further information. The Chair and Secretary are meeting with Ms Booth on 7 April, but no reply has been received as yet from the University.

The Chair and Secretary have also attended:

- a public meeting with Penny Mordaunt MP on Localism and Neighbourhood Plans reported in the local newspaper (The News);
- 2 meetings with staff of the Local Planning Authority;
- an informal meeting in the St James's Hospital site with Norman Lamb, Minister of State for Care and Support reported in the local newspaper and on local radio;
- an open meeting organised by the Leader of Portsmouth City Council to discuss plans for the St James's Hospital site at which the proposed Neighbourhood Planning Forum was publicly discussed, as reported in the local newspaper.

The following meetings have also taken place and are recorded in notes or minutes:

- 29 January 2015 – scoping meeting with councillors for the two wards in the area (notes);
- 12 February 2015 – management committee meeting, 10 members present;
- 3 March 2015 – management committee meeting, 14 members present.