

*The Independent Voice of Local Business*.....

SOUTHAMPTON & FAREHAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

RESPONSE TO FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON  
CORE STRATEGY DPD - PREFERRED OPTIONS - June 2006

CONTEXT - Links to the Community Strategy for the Borough - Para. 2.25

Mention should also be made of the business community. Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce has representatives on Fareham Local Strategic Partnership Board and Task Group for Transport, Planning & Environment.

OBJECTIVE 1 - COMPONENTS OF THE NORTH OF FAREHAM SDA - 4.3.22

Specific mention should be made under the Draft Policy: "Components of the North of Fareham Strategic Development Area" of the principal to ensure adequate public transport provision is secured prior to the granting of planning permission. This was one of the options considered in the Fareham Core Strategy Issues and Options stage, but was not assessed as one of the most sustainable options, when in fact it will contribute greatly to the sustainability of all development, not just the SDA.

Evidenced by the following paragraphs in the current Fareham Core Strategy Preferred Options document:-

**Para. 4.4.5 - Employment and Skills Objective 2** - refers to the Fareham Local Business Needs Survey Sept 2004 saying that "within Fareham Borough itself traffic congestion and poor public transport links to business locations are a serious concern to the business community. Road congestion in Fareham is seen as the single biggest constraint on business"

**Para. 4.6.1 - Transport Strategy and Improvements** - reference is made to the reduced level of investment in the Borough due to considerable peak time congestion on major roads and junctions (M27 at rush hour) which are without adequate public transport.

Chamber Comment: The policy for sustainable development appears to assume we move forward from an already sustainable situation now, but this is not the case in South Hampshire with regard to economically sustainable development. The Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce has consistently expressed the need for transport infrastructure funding to precede any further development in South Hampshire. The level of transport infrastructure which "accompanies" planned development will be but a drop in the ocean compared to the investment needed already today (4.6.9). For this reason, in its response to the South East Plan consultation, the Chamber of Commerce has requested that mention in the SE Plan first draft of a "concordat", which was to be established with Government for the prior provision of much needed infrastructure, be repeated in the final draft version.

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OBJECTIVE 2 - EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Existing Employment Areas - 4.4.25

We support the draft policy of employment land protection and the adoption of a policy presumption in favour of the retention and regeneration of existing employment sites, which will help to slow the rate of employment land lost to residential uses. An economic led strategy needs a policy to protect necessary land and transport facilities, especially as the SDAs are planned for 2016 at the earliest.

Uses Ancillary to Employment - 4.4.28

In larger scale business areas the provision of “support hubs” for business start-up premises would also be appropriate, so as to maintain the already high rate of success for start-up businesses in Fareham area – see ref in para. 4.4.2.

Facilitating a Skilled Workforce - 4.4.30

We support this draft policy for appropriate sector specific learning centres, appropriate business clusters, workplace learning centres and skills development linked to major new employment developments. The Chamber of Commerce has a range of popular business skills courses and would appreciate the opportunity to be considered as partners with the implementation of this policy.

OBJECTIVE 3 - VITALITY OF CENTRES - 4.5.2 and 4.5.32.

We support the draft preferred policy of development of Fareham town centre as a "secondary regional centre" to include the regeneration of West Street, while protecting the retail and leisure core of district and local centres in the Borough.

OBJECTIVE 4 - REDUCING THE NEED TO TRAVEL - 4.6.13

Fareham-Gosport Peninsular (4.6.5)

We are glad to see mention of the re-evaluation of the South Hampshire Rapid Transit proposals (4.6.5), the improvement in interchange provision between bus and rail services and the need to safeguard the former railway line between Fareham Railway Station and Gosport for public transport purposes (4.6.13). The Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport last year expressing strong support for the South Hampshire Rapid Transit Phase 1 project, since rejected.

Whiteley and Segensworth (4.6.6)

We welcome the various improvements mentioned for the key access route via M27 Junction 9 and Segensworth.

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OBJECTIVE 5 - HOUSING NEEDS

Housing Provision (excluding the SDA) - 4.7.10

This policy direction lists "dwellings on unidentified sites" as one of the sources for housing, excluding the SDA. Any policy which allows infilling/use of gardens as unidentified additional building land creates additional traffic congestion and puts pressure on infrastructure. The Chamber of Commerce would wish to see those issues addressed in advance.

Affordable Housing - 4.7.18

No reference is made to the possibility of affordable housing being bought and let, or to the need to control this letting only for eligible households. Otherwise there could be a diminishment of the affordable housing stock.

OBJECTIVE 6 - ESSENTIAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Should IT services and employment services be specifically mentioned?

GLOSSARY - include a definition for "Housing Trajectory" see Appendix 1.

J Chestnutt

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