

Statement by D M Cort

I am making this statement in my capacity as a local resident and also as a joint plot-holder at the Roeshot Hill Allotment site.

I consider that Policy CN1, Christchurch Urban Extension has not been positively prepared and that its proposals are not justified because:

- The proposed site for housing development at Roeshot Hill is bound by the Weymouth-London Railway line and the A35 trunk road requiring that ingress to and egress from the development would be directly onto the A35, thus adding to traffic congestion and road safety in the vicinity of existing pinch points at the Sainsbury's/Shell Garage roundabout and the Highcliffe/Christchurch/Somerford roundabout. The issue of large volumes of traffic entering the A35 in this vicinity have previously been recognised by the council through prevention of A35 access from Westfield Gardens, which would otherwise allow access for residents of the nearby Hoburne housing development.
- The Roeshot Hill proposal does not make any provision for additional school places to serve the development. A development of 950 homes, including approximately 35% social housing, could require anything up to 1,000 additional school places, and I believe this cannot be met by existing schools. In particular, my understanding is that Highcliffe Comprehensive is already fully subscribed.
- The Council's proposal to build 950 homes at Roeshot Hill represents the highest density option of those presented in its Consultation document, whereas the majority of responses preferred one of the lower density options. The Council's proposal therefore ignores the stated wishes of its residents.
- The Council's plans have adverse community and social diversity impacts by virtue of displacing the Roeshot Hill Allotment site, which has more than 200 plot-holders coming from all localities in and around Christchurch, of varying ages, and backgrounds, and which includes provision for disabled allotment gardeners. It also has a waiting-list of approximately two years. In addition to its obvious benefits, the allotments meet valuable community needs, as recognised for the past two years by the Department of Communities and Local Environment through its Green Flag Community Awards Scheme. Roeshot Hill is one of only nine such 2013 awards in South West England. This benefit to Christchurch could be retained through adoption of one of the lower-density build options, which would allow the allotments to remain and co-exist as part of the development. The Council's Strategy does not identify any alternative site for allotments but its tentative proposals involve not only disruption of an existing community but also lower levels of public transport access, provision of lower quality land, a site at increased risk of flooding, or even be outside of Christchurch and East Dorset! It should also be noted that the Roeshot Hill Allotments are the subject of an application in July 2013, made by Christchurch plot-holders, for the site to be listed as a Community Asset under the Community Right to Bid. The Council has acknowledged receipt of the application but has not yet given it consideration.

I am seeking adoption of a reduced level of housing and retention of the Roeshot Hill Allotments.