

AIRFIELD PLANS START OBJECTIONS ALL ROUND

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THE General Committee of Mudeford and Stanpit Residents' Association have lodged an objection with the Minister of Housing and Local Government against the Christchurch Development Map proposals for Christchurch Airfield. The objection is in the form of a three-page letter which also contains objections on nine other points on the Map concerning multi-storey flat development. And at a meeting of the Hampshire Federation of Ratepayer Associations on Saturday it was unanimously agreed to support the Mudeford Association in the protests.

On Monday evening Highcliffe Citizens' Association agreed also to object against the airfield proposals. They will ask that if and when the airfield is no longer needed for its present use it will be retained as an open space. Christchurch Ratepayers' Association also came into the picture with a statement on the subject issued after a special executive meeting on Wednesday evening.

Mr. W. A. Bridge, chairman of Mudeford and Stanpit Residents' Association, told the C.T. that in view of the time limit of September 30 there had been no opportunity to place the matter before a general meeting of the association, the next meeting being October 6.

But an objection had been lodged with the Ministry, the exact terms of which will be made known to members of the association along with the agenda for the October meeting.

Mr. Bridge continued: "So far as the airfield is concerned the committee does not consider that it should be given over to residential development if and when the Government department concerned relinquishes its use."

He added that a copy of the letter to the Minister had been sent to the Hampshire Federation of Ratepayer Associations and this had been discussed at a meeting of that body on Saturday, attended by Mr. Bridge, when it was agreed unanimously to support the Mudeford Association.

At Wednesday's meeting of the C.R.A. executive, policy recommendations for Monday's general meeting were brought up to date on the question of the Town Development Map. The Town Centre Development Plan was not reviewed since this is outside the Town Map proposals as they stand at present. Main points dealt with at this meeting were objections which had been made by ratepayers at Highcliffe and Mudeford concerning the use of the airfield and touching on the question of high density flats.

The statement reads: "After full consideration it was decided we could not recommend the C.R.A. to lodge objection with the Minister on the high density flats question. Ratepayers throughout the borough and in particular in Mudeford require to know much more of what is meant by 'high density' development on properly designated sites such as Sandhills before they can make objections that can be accepted as constructive and likely to carry weight at future planning inquiries.

COASTAL SPRAWLS

"This question is not confined to one ward or part of a ward and as a borough association we are aware that many Christchurch ratepayers are as much opposed to the 'close density' caravan and bungalow sprawls in coastal areas of the town as they would be if the planners permitted flats to be thrown up anywhere to any height without regard to local amenities and local character. "We would certainly resist this if the planners showed themselves to be that unintelligent. That does not mean we can oppose development on properly designated sites, in principle, or have adamant views on just how high flats should go on particular sites. "The executive has no comment to make on the proposition brought to its notice on how to use the land of the airfield if its use as an airfield ever folds up. The future of this land can be settled only by the Ministries and companies concerned and considering how important its present use is to the rate revenue and prosperity of Christchurch as a whole it is our view that a lot of comment at this time by people with other ideas on how to use it or how not to use it would do more harm than good."

The C.T. was further told this week that discussions have taken place with the de Havilland management and the Trade Unions on the airfield question and a move will be made before September 30 objecting to the proposals in the Development Map. A full statement is to be made at a later date.