

"Show Your Hand" Call To D.H.'s On Airfield Policy

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CHRISTCHURCH airfield was one of the main topics at a press conference called in Winchester on Wednesday to discuss the Christchurch Town Development Map, now before the Minister for approval. And it was made clear in the discussions that the airfield holds a vital key to the future residential development in the borough.

Mr. D. H. E. Hockley, Deputy County Planning Officer, said there had never been any question of public acquisition of the airfield over the heads of the de Havilland Aircraft Company. But he added: "We think de Havilland's ought to prove at this stage that the airfield is vital to the continuance of the factory. We think that can only be done through a public inquiry into this development plan". Mr. Hockley said that if the airfield were to remain in its present use very nearly half of the envisaged residential development for the next ten to 15 years would be held up.

If the airfield were still in use beyond 1971 then there would be a shortage of land for residential development beyond that year and the presence of the airfield would hold back high density development not only in the Mudeford area but at Hoburne — two areas thought to be very suitable for this sort of development.

Referring to the proposed development at Mudeford, Mr. Hockley said the planners would like to see a scheme which gave the public access to the harbour frontage and which would provide "peep throughs" to the harbour from the main Mudeford Road. He thought the proposed development in this area would enhance the value of the existing property and would be of benefit to the town as a whole.

THE "SPRAWL"

The bungalow "sprawl" did not help anyone. It was the intention of the planners to improve the standard of living, cater for all tastes and at the same time educate the tastes of the public in architecture.

The County planners felt that there had been a great wastage of land in the past and they were now trying to get a higher density of development of better quality and mixed in character.

Mr. Hockley described the Christchurch survey as "rather novel", saying that it took the form of a land availability survey at the end of 1959. It showed the development in Christchurch during the past ten years.

PUBLICITY

There had been a lot of publicity about the lack of land for development and it was thought that this time the planners should know precisely what was available in the old Town Map — that which had received planning approval and that which was without planning approval but was available for development.

The new plan had been taken to 1981 whereas the old plan was only to 1971.

Within the next 20 years the planners envisaged that 593 extra dwellings would be needed to cater for the natural increase in population. Discounting immigration, the population in the town map area in 1981 could be expected to be about 28,500 persons. The housing requirement figure had been taken on a ratio of 2.7 persons per dwelling which was just a little lower than the national ratio of 2.8.

FOR THOSE COMING IN

It was thought that just under 4,000 dwellings would be needed for people who came into the borough from other parts of the country.

Making up the total of 5,480 dwellings to be required up to 1981 were: replacement of prefabricated dwellings 100; redevelopment at Mudeford 72; slum clearance mid 1959-mid 1971 12, mid 1971-mid 1981 (estimate) 20; natural increase in population 593; inward migration 3,913; and household fragmentation 770. Speaking on industry, Mr. Hockley said it was assumed that one in six people in the borough would be industrially employed. In this case there was sufficient land available to meet requirements over the next 20 years. Christchurch, he thought, was in a happy position so far as employment.

BURTON

Commenting on residential development for Burton, Mr. Hockley said it was possible that the population there would be doubled beyond the next 20 years. The village would provide for some of the housing needs of Ringwood and Fordingbridge R. D.C. and would also provide some measure of housing for people who wanted the village life of Burton. The village would be developed very slowly and the slow rate would give a better quality of development. It would not change the character of Burton.

MISNAMED

Answering questions on Highcliffe's proposed "by-pass", he said the road should never have been called a by-pass. It was a traffic relief road and it would not cut Highcliffe in two as it had been thought in some quarters. It would, he thought, enhance the shopping area in the village.

Throughout, the proposed new road had been misnamed a by-pass. "In no circumstances can it be called a by-pass."

Mr. Hockley added that it was the intention of the planners to watch development in the borough very carefully. It was necessary, now more than ever, to make the best use of the remaining land available for development.