

## Town Map Inquiry

# Planners Expect 4,000 On Mundeford Airfield By 1981

## Mundeford Plan Drew Army Of Objectors

C.T. August 17, 1962

**THE county's comprehensive plan for Mundeford redevelopment which aroused bitter controversy among the residents of the village since it was produced by the planning authority three weeks ago was the main subject of the Town Map inquiry at the Town Hall this week.**

The inquiry, conducted by Ministry of Housing Inspector Mr. A. E. Rochard-Thomas, was into the county's proposals for amending the Town Map and Development Plan for Christchurch.

**The subjects of the inquiry, which lasted three days, starting on Tuesday, also included the plan for developing the airfield for residential use. By 1981 the county planners expected 4,000 people to be living on the airfield if the Minister agreed.**

Altogether, an increase of 11,000 in the population of the borough was anticipated over the next 20 years, the inquiry was told.

In all there were more than 30 objectors to various parts of the amendments, most coming from Mundeford.

Opening the case for the County planning Authority, Mr. A. H. M. Smythe said that all but one of the objections concerned land in the Borough of Christchurch, although the town map also included parts of Lymington and the R.D.C.

In April the Ministry modified the town map so that the white land was increased from 129 acres to 730. Green belt land south of the railway line was changed to white on the plan, but at the moment it was to be considered as green belt. The county anticipated that 797 dwellings would be needed to re-house prefab dwellers, those under slum clearance orders, and those displaced by the redevelopment of Mundeford.

## IMMIGRATION

Provision for immigration into Christchurch was estimated at 3,913 dwellings, and the total increase in the number of dwellings expected by the county was 5,480.

Houses were being built in the borough at the rate of about 250 per year. The plan envisaged this rate of building would continue until 1981.

**The county also envisaged a "considerable increase" in the provision for open space and recreational facilities. The 54.3 acres for recreational use were to be increased to 149.3. This would increase the acreage per 1,000 of population to 4.1.**

The 628 acres at present scheduled for other open space was to be increased to 850, giving a total acreage of 23.1 per 1,000 of population.

Another object of the map was to secure to a certain measure the comprehensive development of the town centre.

Stanpit was a problem which would have to be tackled by the authority, as it was a mixture of residential, shopping and industrial use. "This is undoubtedly an area which will require a further study and further amendment to the plan," said Mr. Smythe.

De Havillands had withdrawn their objection to proposals concerning the airfield, he said, as they no longer had any interest there.

## NOT THE BEST USE

"In the planning authority's view a small airfield such as the one at Christchurch in the heart of a town is not making the best use of such land.

"It is a proper use of this area that it should be developed residentially after 1971," he said.

In the amendment to the Development Plan it was stated by the county planning authority: "One of the areas selected for high density development is situated to the south of the main Stanpit road overlooking the harbour, where it is intended that the existing development should be replaced slowly, over a period of years, according to a comprehensive layout."

**In the planning authority's view the density of the development allowed in the Mundeford redevelopment plan —10 dwellings to the acre — was a "modest one", although he admitted it was the highest in the area. It was not excessive.**

At present the area was largely used by older houses, standing in spacious grounds, with a frontage to the harbour. The planning authority thought it was an area which ought to be developed at a higher density than it was at the moment, and make some contribution to the residential development of this area.

## A GUIDE

The planning authorities considered the re-development plan for Mundeford was the "appropriate layout" for the area. It was a guide, covering individual applications, which however would be carefully studied by the planning authority.

It was proposed to use 10 acres of Christchurch airfield for industrial purposes in addition to 8.7 acres of spare development land attached to the de Havilland factory.

On the question of roads Mr. Smythe said that the town map showed Mundeford Lane as a principal traffic route, running along the airfield boundary. The authority's intention was to widen the Stanpit road and to make up Mundeford Lane into a principal traffic route.

It was envisaged that the population housed on the airfield by 1981 would be about 4,000. Thus both roads would need widening.

## NO COMPULSORY PURCHASE

Turning again to the development plan for the land between Stanpit and Mundeford roads, Mr. Smythe said there was no intention to acquire the land by compulsory purchase.

The deputy county planning officer, Mr. N. R. F. Collins, said in evidence that the objection put forward by Mundeford and Stanpit Residents' Association was considered the most comprehensive including virtually all the individual objectors' reasons.

In 1960 two applications for the development of Inveravon and Riverslea, two adjacent houses and grounds, were received by the planning authority. These were plans for the demolition of the two houses and the intensive development of the sites as flats, going up to eight storeys. The authority had refused permission and referred them to the Minister. These had been included as objections at the inquiry.

**The approved town map showed the density in population of the area as 12 persons to the acre. By 1981, under the plan, this would become 29 to the acre.**

The residential density for the complete area was "not really high", being only 30.1 people to the acre, he said.

"The interesting character and amenity of the locality will be changed by the development, but not destroyed. A guide plan, such as that intended for the area by the

planning authority, will prevent piecemeal redevelopment, which would undoubtedly destroy the character of the area."

He said that the layout of the area would be carefully designed to ensure that the privacy of residents would not be disturbed.

The Minister was therefore requested to agree in principle to the need for such a "master plan" for the development of the land at Mudeford over the next 20 years, and to improve the town map. In the context of the town map, the Mudeford redevelopment was concerned only with population density.

## FIVE STOREYS

Mr. Collins said the Mudeford redevelopment involves blocks of flats up to five storeys. He agreed with Mr Phillip Evans, representing Mudeford and Stanpit Residents Association, that the plan had been first produced on July 20.

Mr. Collins thought it would be possible to develop some of the buildings planned in Mudeford before sea protection works were carried out.

The planning authority had not made a study of the height of waves although he considered this problem could be solved.

**"It is necessary to have the assistance of the property owners in order to bring the spine road in," he agreed with Mr. Evans. Compulsory purchase might be necessary, however, for the road.**

Because of protection measures to be taken against the sea, the whole of the land planned for redevelopment at Mudeford could be developed.

Mr. Evans suggested there was no demand for flats in Mudeford. Mr. Collins denied this; the applications for permission to build flats there, already received, suggested there was sufficient demand.

## NEVER A WINTER WITHOUT FLOODING

Giving evidence in support of the Residents' Association, Miss Florence Hamilton, of Harbour House, Mudeford, said: "There has never been a winter to my knowledge when my garden was not flooded." She produced a photograph of flooding at Inveravon taken in 1916.

"We have the land in the summer, the sea has it in the winter" she said. She told Mr. Smythe she had no choice with this "sharing arrangement" with the sea.

She contended that because of flooding much of the land scheduled in the plan could not be developed. Those houses already there were built 300 feet away from the water.

## A SIMPLE CASE

Mr. Evans said the Residents' Association case was simple. Its 500 members lived in Mudeford, and "recognised that their properties would have to be redeveloped."

They also recognised that an overall plan for the area was necessary. "They are ready and willing at all times to put forward a plan to suit everybody, but they have so far had no chance to do so."

The Association, he said, were ready to instruct consultants to prepare a plan.

"The plan of the density of the area and the road plan is something which ought to have been the subject of open discussion with the residents concerned, and that did not mean producing a plan on July 20 and holding the inquiry four weeks later.

## DELETION

The Association wanted deleted from the development plan the paragraph relating to the high density development near the water's edge. It stated that one of the areas selected for high density was this area.

He said that when the town centre development plan was put forward by the planning authorities there was full discussion and consultation with the property owners concerned.

This was also to be the case in the development plan to be produced for the Purewell area. This had not been the case in Mudeford.

"The fairness of the matter demands that the residents in the village have the opportunity of putting forward, through the mouths of consultants whom they seek to employ, other ways and means of dealing with the problem of redevelopment appropriately".

The planning authority had not made any effort to study flooding in the area.

**"This is not just an idle objection by the Residents' Association. This is not an area which can readily and easily be developed. It would involve enormous expense in sea defence work and reclamation work."**

Next, he said that without substantial public funds being spent on sea protection, the planned spine road and any harbour side development would be subject to flooding. He pointed out that the actual detailed development of the Mudeford area was not the subject of the inquiry, only the density of the development was concerned.

Once the density was approved on the town map, if it should be, there would be no alternative but to allow flats there, in accordance with the county's plan.

The Association, he said, wanted the town map amendment to say that the Mudeford redevelopment area should be the subject of a comprehensive area development map to be submitted at a later date.

## JUSTICE

"The only way in which justice can be done is to give the residents a chance to put their views on the redevelopment plan to the Minister in detail," he concluded.

Mr. Smythe said the county intended that the development should be done with the co-operation of property owners. Applications before the Minister at the moment indicated a willingness on the part of some residents to co-operate with the redevelopment.

## ONLY HALF COULD BE DEVELOPED

Mr. J. Scott Grosvenor, an objector, of 81, Stanpit, said that only half of the redevelopment area of Mudeford was able to be developed as much of it was liable to flooding. This would increase the density on the higher land if the overall density was to remain at 30.1.

"To crowd 30.1 people per acre into that area, which is liable to flooding, would spoil the scenic beauty of the area," he said.

As for the airfield, Mr. Scott Grosvenor thought that all but the centre should be retained as open space. This was an ideal site for recreational facilities.

Mr. Smythe dismissed this as "quite unrealistic".

Mr. J. L. Langer, supporting the Residents' Association's objection, said it would spoil the "delightful area". People who wanted the density of development envisaged for Mudeford waterfront could go to Bournemouth and should not be allowed to disturb and destroy the "quiet serenity of Mudeford".

Mr. A. G. Llewellyn represented other Mudeford residents, Mrs. E. M. Seed, Harbour Side, Mudeford, Miss B. Bennett, Avonhithe, Mudeford, Dr. Noel Carr, Martins Close, Mudeford, and Mr. and Mrs. R. Burnage, of Mude Cottage, Mudeford. They all objected in similar terms to the Residents' Association's case.

## HIGH DENSITY OBJECTION

Ald. Mrs. Dorothy Baker, of 16, Stanpit, objected to the high density of the development planned, the height of flats, the spine road which is proposed to run through the development, and said that half the area would be flooded in winter and therefore was not suitable for building. She produced several photographs of flood-water in the gardens of buildings in Mudeford Road.

She also said it would interfere with the "scenic beauty of the area".

**She said that Fisherman's Bank —"an unsophisticated stretch of the most beautiful place in Christchurch"—would be spoilt by the plan to make that part of Mudeford's waterfront into a minor sailing centre.**

The "most awful thing of all" was the idea that Fisherman's Bank might be covered by tarmac.

Mr. Smythe said that the scenic beauty of the area after development was a matter of the design of the buildings put there.

Other objections on the same grounds as those of the Residents' Association were put forward by Mr. G. J. W. Scragg, of Stanpit Post Office, Mrs. V. M. Wicks, 90 Pauntley Road, Miss Knight, of 100, Pauntley Road, who was representing Mudeford Townswomen's Guild and Miss E. T. Coyne, Mrs. G. H. Ray, of 156, Stanpit, Mrs. J. E. Sheppard, of 124, Stanpit, and Mrs. Hilary Monk, of 128, Stanpit.

Mr. J. H. Lavender, vice-chairman, representing the Avon Valley branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, said that the C.P.R.E. preferred Mudeford Residents' Association's alternative plan for lateral roads between the waterfront to Mudeford Road at regular intervals.

The uses made at present of the harbour brought in people who wanted the rural type of surroundings. This should not be changed by the erection of high density development.

## A COMPLAINT DUE TO STRESS

Mr. John Austin, secretary, representing Christchurch Harbour and Rivers Association, which has 150 members, said the Association was formed to protect the amenities of the harbour in the interests of the boating fraternity.

"Doctors' surgeries throughout this country are full of people suffering from a complaint which cannot be diagnosed but which is due to stress.

"We feel that any Government should give consideration to any place which gives relief from the stresses of life. In Christchurch Harbour, God has given us one of the most outstanding places of this type along the whole of the south coast.

"The amenities of this area are of vital importance to the nation as a whole, as well as local residents. Boating is no longer a rich man's prerogative; it is a national pastime. Christchurch Harbour is used more and more by large numbers of people each year.

**"The major part of the beauty of the harbour lies in the peaceful scenery. At the right side we are fortunate in having a council (Bournemouth) who decreed that the land there should be kept as open space.**

"We have a very large number of tall forest trees at Mundeford. High density development would mean high buildings, reaching above the trees, and would therefore become a source of continual irritation to the eye."

He said he knew of no evidence to suggest that flats were wanted. On the contrary one developer in New Milton had come to the conclusion that his flats would not sell.

### SPECULATORS

"We feel it is simply speculators who wish to enhance the value of their land by getting planning permission for flats, and then depart, leaving the area ruined for posterity."

Mr. R. J. Sheppard, of Harbour Heights, Mundeford, between Inveravon and Rushford Warren, said when he built his bungalow, he had to put 600 tons of hard core onto the land to raise it in height by three to six feet. He admitted he had to raise it to this height to be able to use the main sewer, rather than flood water.

Under the redevelopment plan, he would be "completely surrounded" by high flats. He thought the density allowed should be such as to restrict the height of flats to three storeys. Also, the proposed "spine road" would go right through the middle of his garden.

### OBJECTIONS DIVIDED

Turning to the airfield, Mr. Collins said the objections to the amendment to the Town Map allowing residential use there were divided into two groups. One group claimed the airfield should be kept as open space. The other was an objection to the amount of land allocated for industrial use.

"The local planning authority have always maintained that the use of the airfield as such should be discontinued because it was almost entirely encircled by residential development, and the consequent flying hazard, and because of the shortage of suitable land to accommodate the expected population. Building on neighbouring land was already inhibited by the height restrictions necessary to safeguard the runway approaches," he said.

At the public inquiry into the original Town Map proposals, the local authority said the airfield was badly sited, injurious to amenity and a potential danger to public safety. There was, however, no objection to its continued use by de Havillands, as they were engaged on important work.

De Havillands were now closing, and the county therefore thought it appropriate to indicate once again the residential development of the airfield on the reviewed Town Map.

**The county's plan was to use 113 of the 191 acres of the airfield for residential development at a density of 35.5 people to the acre, providing accommodation for 4,020 people. Fourteen acres would be used for two primary schools, with an infants' school adjoining, and 34 acres for secondary schools.**

This would leave 10 acres for additional industrial land, and 20 acres for public open space, including public playing fields.

Mr. Collins said that the development was proposed to take place after 1971, as they were satisfied there was sufficient land for the development up to this time in Highcliffe, Bosley Heath, St. Catherine's Hill, and in Burton.

"After 1971, it will be necessary to build on the airfield if good agricultural land and the green belt to the north of Christchurch are to be preserved. In fact, there is only one major area proposed to be added for development in the period beyond 1971, and that is Christchurch airfield," he said.

## IMPOSSIBLE

As for the objections on the grounds that the area ought to be preserved for public open space, Mr. Collins said this was impossible.

He referred to the increase in public open space the Council planned in the future, adding that there would be 851.3 acres of such land by 1981—23.1 acres per thousand population.

"As will be seen, Christchurch is well endowed with open space and the planning authority submits that there is no justification whatsoever for allowing more than the 20 acres of open space and playing fields on the airfield."

## UNION'S OBJECTION

Mr. Harry Watmough, secretary of the local branch of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, said their objection was that there was not a large enough allocation for industrial use.

He said that for an anticipated increase in population of 11,000 in 20 years' time, the county's plan allowed merely 10 acres of land for industrial development.

"Since the closure of the de Havilland factory, we run the risk of the factory remaining there as a white elephant." As it was a building of considerable size as one unit it was difficult to get firms interested. He thought it would have been easier if the 27 acres on which it stood were just land, then it could be "parcelled up" and sold as a number of units.

Thus, he continued, the de Havilland factory could not be counted upon as a 27-acre allocation for industrial use.

He pointed out that if the 10 acres allocated by the county were used in a similar way to the de Havilland factory when at peak employment, then the allocation would be able to provide employment for 800 people.

Mr. Collins replied that the planning authority viewed this apprehension "sympathetically", especially as de Havillands were closing.

## CONJECTURE

"It must, however, be pointed out that the industrial land associated with de Havilland's factory is still zoned for industrial use on the review Town Map and the future use of the existing factory is still a matter of conjecture.

"The new industrial concerns which may take over the existing factory will no doubt develop the adjoining open land zoned for industrial use and could well employ the same or even more workers per acre than did de Havillands at the peak period of its production.

"It could indeed be developed as a new industrial estate," he added.

Mr. Macfadyen, objecting that there was insufficient land for industrial development in the 10 acre allocation on the airfield.

The Council wanted an additional allocation of 30 acres to be provided in the 70 acre site bounded by the by-pass, Purewell, Stony Lane and Burton Road.

This land was not suitable for residential development, because of the vicinity of the Sewage Works.

## PLANNING CHAIRMAN

Coun. W. E. Tucker, chairman of the local Planning Committee, gave evidence on behalf of Christchurch Borough Council.

Dealing with the industrial land at Stony Lane he said that when the objection was submitted, the town had the benefit of full employment in the aircraft industry at the de Havilland factory and the company occupied all the land adjoining the factory as there was no site for other new industry in the borough.

"The Council were afraid even then that employment might not continue for many years. They recognised the need for sites for smaller industries which would form a reservoir of employment and help to preserve the general prosperity of the town should aircraft industry collapse.

"Unfortunately the collapse of the aircraft industry has come sooner than the Council imagined possible. While it is likely that the de Havilland buildings owned by the Ministry of Aviation will be sold or let for some other industrial purpose no one knows when they will once again start to give substantial employment.

**"In the meantime the valuable skilled labour force in Christchurch — the retention of which is important to the town— is drifting away. Much of this drift could have been avoided if some land had been allocated for industry.**

"It is known that there would have been persons leaving de Havilland factory and willing to set up new factories in Christchurch had sites been available.

"There were firms who would be willing to build factories on land near Stony Lane— firms who find the possibility of buying the whole or say one-third part of the de Havilland factory too large a commitment for them. Other firms would have been willing to start quite small businesses here and employ the redundant skilled labour.

#### OPPORTUNITY LOST

"In this way jobs, would be available for many skilled men but that opportunity has been lost because no land is available for such industry and because the Ministry of Aviation seem to be still hoping for a buyer of the whole (or as much as one-third of the whole) of the de Havilland factory and are not negotiating for the sale of small areas.

"Even if the Ministry change their present policy it is detrimental to the interests of the borough that the only available industrial land should all be in one ownership.

**"My Council therefore believe that the opportunity should now be taken to avoid the tragic consequences of the past policy of the Local Planning Authority.**

"An area of land between Stony Lane and Burton Road is admirably suited for industrial use. It is poor agricultural land and it is unsuitable for residential development (it is near the Sewage Works). On the other hand it is capable of being given excellent access and the labour force is near at hand.

"The present limited industrial development in Stony Lane has proved very successful. Their flourishing nature and desire for extended factory space indicates that the area is ideal in every respect.

"There are other companies even now interested in sites in this area and my committee would welcome permission being given for suitable factories subject to design, access and site position being agreed.

"There is moreover a need for sites where existing industries, which are amongst residential properties, can re-establish themselves when the time comes.

#### NOT SUFFICIENT

"While it is also a sound idea to contemplate an industrial area immediately south of the de Havilland factory buildings, this is not sufficient for reasons already mentioned.

"I am aware of the proposals of the Planning Authority to prepare an overall plan for the land north of Purewell. I welcome this because it is an obsolescent area which needs such help.

**"But I am anxious to ensure that such a plan will include substantial provision for industry and unfortunately the Planning Authority have not yet committed themselves to such provision. Adequate industrial development nearby would do much to restore Purewell to prosperity.**

Ringwood and Fordingbridge R.D.C. and Lt.-Col. Sir George Meyrick were objectors to the county's proposals for the long-term Highcliffe by-pass and the more immediate relief road between Lymington and Lyndhurst roads.

Mr. Smythe said the by-pass planned for Highcliffe would run through from the east of Highcliffe to the A35 near the Cat and Fiddle. The remainder of the 3.9-mile road would consist of realignment of the A35 from this point to join the Christchurch by-pass about half-way down. This would cut out the Somerford roundabout for through traffic.

**The relief road was a more immediate plan to construct a new road between the Lymington and Lyndhurst roads, so that traffic from New Milton and towns in that area could join the A35 without passing through Highcliffe shopping centre.**

For Sir George Meyrick, Mr. J. S. Denson said the realignment of the A35 would spoil the west part of the village of Hinton, and would involve the destruction of a number of cottages. It would destroy the amenity of the area, and would involve unnecessary demolition of Roeshot farm buildings, as well as splitting up the farm to unmanageable small amounts.

#### R.D.C.'s CASE

The R.D.C.'s case was put by the deputy clerk, Mr. E. W. Hughes.

He said that the relief road, which would have to cross the railway, would be expensive to construct, and that the necessary improvements of traffic facilities between the A35 and Highcliffe could be easily achieved by widening the existing Ringwood Road, as was the plan on the original development plan.

Mr. F. H. N. Elton, deputy county surveyor, said the by-pass scheme was long term and to by-pass the whole of the development area of Highcliffe.

In 1956 a survey showed that 78% of the traffic on the A337 was merely "through traffic".

**The short relief road, 1.15 miles long, and costing about £132,400 and a single 24ft. carriageway would be superseded by the bypass costing £769,000.**

The minimum effective by-pass would run from Chewton Glen to Hinton crossroads, and would cost £403,750.

#### BOROUGH'S VIEWS

Mr. F. R. C. Hart, Christchurch deputy engineer and surveyor, gave evidence on the local Council's views on the proposals:

"Christchurch Council have for many years in consultation with Hampshire County Council been considering what steps should be taken to deal with the ever-increasing amount of traffic in Highcliffe. The traffic arises from three sources —through traffic along Lymington Road, traffic to the beaches and car parks in the summer season, and traffic of persons visiting Highcliffe for shopping and business purposes

"Some improvements have been made since the current Town Map was approved, namely widening the carriageway through most of Highcliffe shopping area to 24 feet, and instituting 'unilateral waiting' or 'No Waiting' orders where appropriate, and also making up

of Wharncliffe Road, which permits traffic to the beach from the west to avoid the shopping area. Furthermore plans are far advanced for widening Ringwood Road."

The major problem was through traffic, he said. When the survey was made in 1956 it was decided that the routes of the relief road and the by-pass should be retained and reserved on the Town Map.

"The Borough Council are agreeable to this course but they have always urged that traffic from the east along A337 which is not concerned to visit Highcliffe should be diverted to the A35. This is a reason for the widening of Ringwood Road now awaiting commencement.

"It is proposed when that work is done to indicate by signposts and junction design that through traffic should go northwards and join A35 to Christchurch and Bournemouth. Experience from this widening and signposting of the route should help in determining the priority of the two by-passes shown on the Reviewed Town Map.

"In pursuance of that policy the Council object to a road system which would not discourage traffic to Christchurch and Bournemouth from using the short by-pass and consequently Lymington Road and Highcliffe Road a route which has the great disadvantage that, while it relieves the shopping area, it does not avoid the large number of accesses from frontage development along Lymington Road and in respect of which all the objections to a heavily trafficked road passing through a developed area with direct access to that development will remain."

## SUPPORT

Supporting the Council's case, Mr. J. W. T. Blackwood, general manager of Atcos Ltd., said his firm received a great many applications for industrial sites in Christchurch, particularly Stony Lane.

A "typical example", he said, was Brush Crystal Ltd., of Hythe Southampton, electronic component manufacturers, who were expanding and looking for a site in this area. At first, they would employ about 300, and 600 within five years. They wanted a three-acre site in Stony Lane.

The land near de Havillands was "tucked away", whereas that at Stony Lane had excellent communications because of the proximity of the by-pass.

He agreed with Mr. Smythe that they wanted a "prestige site" which could be seen from a major road.

The owner of some land at Stony Lane, Mr. John Daun, of 19, Bure Lane, Christchurch, told the inquiry he received about half a dozen applications per year for using it for industry.

After the inquiry, the inspector visited the various sites. The Minister's decision will be made known later.