



Press Release

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THE COUNCILS RESPONSE TO SOLVE & COUNTRYWATCH'S LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IS FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED, EVASIVE AND "LACKS CANDOUR."

SOLVE and CountryWatch's legal team, led by Tony Child of leading London law firm DAC Beachcroft (a leading legal expert in Judicial Reviews of this kind, www.dacbeachcroft.com/people/directory/tony_child.htm), believes the Council's response "is inconsistent with The Council's 'Duty of Candour'", and "avoids addressing the grounds on which the legality of the Council's decision is impugned".

Clive Pinder of SOLVE said "It is clear to our legal team, who are nationally recognised experts in this field, that the Council's legal position is fundamentally flawed and that their initial response is evasive by failing to address the key issues. We continue to seek a balanced and reasonable solution to the exclusion of Manydown from this LDF process, but The Council continue to ignore the core issues. In doing so we believe they are failing in their public duty of Candour and we are concerned they may be seriously misleading our elected representatives.

Consequently, in our opinion the information Councillors are receiving is just 'plain wrong', which means it is inevitable that the current LDF will be open to legal and planning challenge from any number of organisations."

"It is a shame that The Council continue to refuse to engage in a constructive discussion with our Legal Counsel, or indeed seek a second opinion from experts in this field. Despite our best efforts to avoid one, it makes the prospect of a Judicial Review almost inevitable; and we are confident it will be successful causing further unnecessary expense and delay to an already flawed and overdue process".

SOLVE believes in transparent planning decisions made on a level playing field, and the legal exchange between SOLVE's lawyers and The Council is available for anyone with access to the internet to review and make their own minds up.

SOLVE & CountryWatch wish to make it clear that "We do not support large scale development on any Greenfield sites east or west of the town. However, if the Council are going to renege on their pre-election promise not to build any large scale developments on any countryside, and ignore the central theme of the public consultation that residents do not want to see any large scale developments on Greenfield sites; then we believe that Councillors have a duty to consider ALL sites on their merits, not on the self-serving results of a legally flawed process".

SOLVE (Save Our Loddon Valley Environment) is a non-political group of over 1500 local residents who believe our unique eco-systems and historic sites of national significance are as important as our economic aspirations and should be protected for the continued enjoyment of all of Basingstoke's communities. www.SOLVELoddon.org

CountryWatch is a non-party political and non-profit making organization whose objectives are to protect the rural environment and way of life on the Eastern flank of the Borough. It has nine parish councils as corporate members representing some 14,000 electoral roll parishioners, and has been prominent in participating in the current LDF process.