



Press Release

Contact: Clive Pinder
Phone: 07718 537377/01256 768654

EMBARGOED UNTIL THURS DECEMBER 15.

**SOLVE & COUNTRY WATCH BEGIN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS CLAIMING
BASINGTOKE & DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL (BDBC) HAVE “ACTED
UNLAWFULLY” BY EXCLUDING MANYDOWN FROM THE CORE
STRATEGY.**

SOLVE & Country Watch, supported by communities from the north, east & south of the Borough, today gave notice to the Officers’ & Administration of BDBC of their intent to instigate a Judicial Review if Manydown is not included in the Core Strategy being submitted for public consultation. This extended group of community organisations representing over 20,000 Residents have retained the Counsel of leading London law firm DAC Beachcroft and their Public law Consultant Tony Child, who is recognised nationally as a leading legal expert in Judicial Reviews of this kind (http://www.dacbeachcroft.com/people/directory/tony_child.htm).

Explaining the rationale for this action, Peter Bloyce of SOLVE said “We feel we have no option but to take this route, having been stonewalled in all our attempts to use the normal local democratic processes by the imperious and non-responsive attitude of the Officers & The Conservative led Administration.”

Peter goes on to say, “As recently as the last EPP meeting, we asked simply for the Council to seek a second opinion on the legality of Manydown’s exclusion. As has happened for the last 2 years, The Conservative majority showed no inclination to listen or engage in a constructive dialog and reverted to their usual practice of apparently whipping their Members to avoid any debate or a truly independent review of their decision to exclude Manydown.”

It is symptomatic of the unlawful manner in which the Council has proceeded that at the meeting of the Planning and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 September 2011 the Chair and Officers advised Members that they were not permitted to consider the Manydown site as it was a Landowner’s decision, hence it’s referral to the Economic, Prosperity and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee. When the matter of Manydown came before the latter committee on 23 November 2011, Members were advised that “the Local Planning Authority have deemed it not available “!

In conclusion SOLVE & CountryWatch made 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 procedural sleight of hand. If they decline this request, the only options left to us are the Law Courts and The Ballot Box”.

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.