

New Christchurch Primary School – Alternative site review

Fifteen potentially alternative sites have been put forward by the Marsh Lane Action Group for further review and consideration as alternative sites to the use of land off of Marsh Lane for the development of the proposed new 2FE primary school to serve the west Christchurch area. Please note the statements shown in *italics* against a number of sites are from the MLAG, and not DCC.

The following responses are offered in respect of each of the sites suggested:-

1. **Bailey Bridge** (*where ASDA store was proposed, apparently now withdrawn*)

Not suitable: This site has been assessed as being too small for the development of a school of the appropriate size. The site shape is awkward and not conducive for laying out playing fields and external accommodation. It is inappropriately sited for a school next to the railway line, industrial and retail units. It is currently not for sale on the open market.

The site is geographically in the wrong location as it is too close to the existing Infant and Junior schools.

2. **Old Christchurch Police Station site (Bargates)**

Not Suitable: The two access points for this site are from Barrack Road and Bargates, both extremely busy town centre routes, noisy, unsuitable for a Primary School. The current buildings would be unsuitable and would have to be demolished and replaced. There would be no space for playing field provision on the site. The closest provision would be the open public recreation ground across Barrack Road which, even if use of this area could be agreed, would not be suitable for use during the school day. The site measures 1.16 Ha which is not big enough for the accommodation required for a 2FE Primary School. Again it is geographically in the wrong location for the community the school needs to serve.

3. **Twynham School** (*they have a large playing field, are in the process of becoming an 'Academy' and are already hosting temporary classrooms for Christchurch Infant School*)

Not Suitable: Twynham School is now an Academy. Its playing field is already insufficient in area to meet its own needs for a secondary school of that size. Development on the playing fields would not be permitted under Planning Regulations; Sport England would object to the loss of Playing Fields and the fields lie in a Flood Zone. The School has just invested a lot of money on improving the condition of the playing fields to sustain the amount of use for a secondary school.

It is geographically in the wrong location for the primary age pupils the new school is intended to serve in the long term.

4. **Christchurch Junior School** (*they have a large playing field and their site adjoins Christchurch Infant School*)

Not Suitable: Christchurch Junior School's playing fields are already insufficient in area to meet its own needs for a school of that size. Development on the playing fields would not be permitted under Planning Regulations; Sport England would object to the loss of Playing Fields.

It would also put a greater concentration of pupils in that area, and the infrastructure in the vicinity does not have the capacity for such an increase.

5. **Allotment area in Rutland Rd**

Not Suitable: Allotments have a unique status in Planning Law. Development on an Allotment would require Ministerial approval.

6. **Jumpers Common**

Not Suitable: The area of Jumpers Common at the north west end of the Cemetery is only 1.1Ha in area and is not large enough for a 2FE Primary School.

7. **Montessori Nursery on Fairmile Rd**

Not Suitable: The site is currently occupied by private business. There appears to be an area of rough ground adjacent to the Nursery on Fairmile Road but this is too small for a 2FE Primary School.

8. **St Catherine's Hill (lower areas bordering Fairmile Rd)**

Not Suitable: The lower areas of St Catherine's Hill are all Registered Common Land. An Application to the Planning Inspectorate would have to be made to deregister any Common Land proposed for development. Alternative suitable replacement Common land would have to be found and approved. There is a lengthy and rigorous consultation process and success is highly unlikely. These areas are also designated as Town Common SSSI, Dorset Heathlands SPA, Dorset Heaths SAC, Greenbelt and RAMSAR Wetland of International Importance - non-starter.

9. **Iford golf course & Tennis courts**

Not Suitable: Already established as a sports and recreation area. The Golf Course is adjacent to the River Stour and is within the Flood Zones 2 and 3 which are at high risk of flooding. There would be a presumption against any development in these areas.

10. Agricultural land bordering Hurn Rd between St Catherine's Hill and Hurn

Not Suitable: These areas are also Registered Common Land, Open Access Land or Dedicated Access Land. Each of these designations has a presumption against development; see comments under St Catherine's Hill.

11. Agricultural land around the airport

Not Suitable: Geographically in the wrong location for the community it needs to serve. Much of the land is designated as Open Access land as above, and is also susceptible to surface water flooding, unsuitable due to noise levels, and on the edge of the catchment area.

12. Land between Reid St and railway

We would need more clarity on the precise location being referred to, but geographically too close to the existing schools, probably too small for the schools needs and in the wrong location for the community it needs to serve.

13. Land at rear of Peeks in Reid St

As above.

14. Unused industrial land around Christchurch Airfield (*this is East Christchurch but the fundamental need for the school to be in West Christchurch could be challenged – this is a 'brown field' site*)

Geographically the wrong location for the community it needs to serve.

15. Beagle Aircraft site off Stony Lane

Not Suitable: Site already occupied and developed and geographically in the wrong location.